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A comparative research between the Macedonian Tombs and the Scythian Kurgans

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Abstract

This dissertation was written as part of the MA in Black Sea Cultural Studies at the International Hellenic University.

In the first chapter of this paper, a description of the Scythian funerary customs is presented. Herodotus was the first who tried to present some of their traditions. Thanks to his narration in the fourth book of his *Histories*, the Scythian funerary customs survived until now. Nowadays, some of the Herodotus' information are confirmed due to the archaeological findings of the northern Black Sea area. The main remains of the Scythian burial constructions are the so-called kurgans. The kurgans were the burial mounds which covered the tombs of the Scythian elite. Some of these kurgans were called "Royal Kurgans", firstly, because of the luxurious burial finds which were found in their interiors and secondly because of the great height which these burial mounds had.

The Macedonian funerary traditions are presented, in the second chapter of this dissertation, as they derive from the archaeological remains of the Macedonian land. Similarly to the first chapter, there is the description of the funerary constructions of the Macedonian aristocracy, the so-called Macedonian Tombs. A great number of Macedonian tombs have been found at Vergina, some of which are called "Royal Macedonian Tombs" because of their precious findings.

In the third chapter of this paper, there is an attempt for a comparative approach between the Scythian Kurgans and the Macedonian Tombs as they derive from the archaeological remains of these burial constructions.

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Preface

In my MA in the Black Sea Cultural Studies at the International Hellenic University, I became familiar with the most of the cultures and the tribes which inhabited this region from the ancient times until nowadays and which were previously an unknown field to me. Nevertheless, I was most interested in the ancient cultures of the region, as archaeology is my field of bachelor studies and work. However, from all these tribes, the Scythians were the most attractive for me because of their culture and customs.

My field of work, the last five years, is the archaeological research on the region of Macedonia, through the excavations. So, in my final MA dissertation, I would like to combine the knowledge which I gained from my studies in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki with the new and very interesting ones which I have studied in this MA program. From the beginning of this MA, I have noticed some common points and similarities between the Macedonians and the Scythians. These similarities were concentrated especially in the burial customs of these two cultures. At first the exterior resemblance of the burial constructions and after that the similarities in some of their burial findings, made me think that all these could not be just a coincidence, or could it?

Thus, this first question was the motivation for the beginning of this research which is titled "A comparative research between the Macedonian tombs and the Scythian kurgans". So, I would try to give an answer to this question through a comparative approach between the Macedonian and Scythian funerary customs, burial findings and architectural burial structures,

At this point, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the supervisor of this dissertation, Manolis Manoledakis, who was also an assistant professor in my MA program, to the completion of this paper. He was the most important guide to my effort. Finally, I owe an additional thanks to all the professors of this MA program with whom I had the fortune to work with.

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Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is the presentation of a comparative research between the Macedonian tombs and the Scythian kurgans. In the first chapter of this paper I will deal with the description of the Scythian tombs and the Scythian customs, as they derive from the archaeological findings, which came to light thanks to the archaeological researches which took place in the northern Black Sea region from the 18th century until nowadays. Unfortunately, the field of the Scythian tombs, and the Scythian archaeology in general, due to the political regime in part of the Black Sea region until the decline of the Soviet Union, remained unknown to the western world, while the whole area was isolated, even to the scientists. However, nowadays and after the political changes in the area, many scientific researches have been translated from the Russian to European languages and many European archaeological schools participate in the researches, which are carried out in the region until now. Nowadays, the archaeology of the area becomes more and more familiar to the global archaeological society and simultaneously the interest for the study of the cultures of the Black Sea region gradually increases. Thus, after my study in the master program of the Cultural Studies of the Black Sea in the IHU, I found particularly interesting the research of the Scythian culture and especially the Scythian burial customs, which were previously unclear to me. Having as a starting point of my research the fourth book of Herodotus' *Histories*, and a number of archaeological researches, books and papers as guides, which deal with this subject, I tried to report the most important of the archaeological discoveries of the Scythian burial tradition.

At first sight, the Scythian burial structures could bring to mind some of the Greek funerary structures, which are located in the region of Macedonia, in the northern Greece, the so-called Macedonian tombs. This external similarity created some thoughts to me, which I should answer after a thorough research. Thus, in the second chapter of this paper, I continued with the search of the Macedonian tombs. The type of the Macedonian tombs is a well known field for the Greek archaeologists. A special reference was given in this paper to the archaeological site of Vergina, due to the important findings, which identified Vergina with Aegae, the first capital city of the Macedonian kingdom.

From the beginning of the 19th century many travelers and archaeologists have mentioned the unknown remains of a historical culture in the area. However, after the first researches, which were carried out in the wider area of Vergina by the French

archaeologist Leon Heuzey, the first evidences of the existence of an ancient Macedonian site came to light. There, the first tomb of a cemetery, a Great burial Tumulus and the ruins of a palace were identified. From 1938, the archaeologist K. Rhomaïos was in charge of the excavations in the area. Under his supervision, the second Macedonian tomb of the area and a great part of the palace were uncovered. In 1959, two professors of the Aristotelean University of Thessaloniki, M. Andronikos and G. Bakalakis, succeeded K. Rhomaïos in the supervision of the excavations in the palace. Additionally, in 1952 the excavations of the first five tombs of the cemetery began. Dozens of archaeological discoveries followed at Vergina in the next decades. However, the great discoveries of the royal tombs at Vergina were uncovered between 1976 and 1980 and they have been characterized as “the most important archaeological discoveries in Greece of the past half-century”^{1, 2}

Hundreds of books have been written and a lot of researches have been made about this subject and many archaeological schools worldwide deal with the Macedonian culture. In this chapter, I dealt with the Greek funerary customs and especially with the Macedonian ones, as they could derive from the burial archaeological finds. A special description was given to the main burial structure of the Macedonian aristocracy, which was the Macedonian tombs. Furthermore, the architectural form and some of the most important findings, which have been uncovered in some of the most important Macedonian tombs, were described. In the final section of this chapter a specific reference was given to the royal Macedonian tombs, two of which, the tomb II and III, have been found unlooted. The discovery of the unlooted tombs was a very important coincidence because they constituted, the only until now, closed archaeological contexts, which provide us with important conclusions, not only about the funerary customs of the Macedonians, but also about the way of the Macedonian life and society.

In the third and final chapter of the dissertation, I tried to compare the burial customs of the Macedonians with those of the Scythians. Many researchers have already noticed some similarities among many of the grave goods, which have been found in the tombs of both cultures. In my research, apart from the comparison of similar objects, such as jewelry, weapons and vessels, I also compared the burial structures of both societies, which were constructed in both cases for the elite members. Additionally, I reported some common points, which could be detected in the burial architectural buildings of the

1 Borza 1990, 257.

2 Andronikos 1984, 17-22.

Macedonian and Scythian upper social classes, which have been called Macedonian tombs and Scythian kurgans. Finally, after the examination of the mobile and immobile findings, I referred to some similar elements in the funerary traditions, which could be derived as a conclusion after all the comparative approaches. The fact that there are some generally accepted common points between Macedonians and Scythians raises some questionings. These questionings would be examined and, if possible, some hypothetical answers would be given as a conclusion of this paper.

1.The Scythian Kurgans

1.1. The Scythian burial customs according to Herodotus' narration

The first record in the history of the Scythian tribe is due to the ancient Greek historian, Herodotus. Herodotus' narration in the fourth book of his *Histories* is the only ancient written source that is preserved about the Scythian way of life until now. He speaks about the Scythian every day procedures of their life, as milking, but he also speaks about great rituals, as a king's funeral. He gives to his audience, the Athenians, information about a world that they knew its existence, but a world that is so far away of them, literally but also metaphorically. Furthermore, he is also a source of information for the modern scholars, who deal with the Scythians. The modern scholars gain information from Herodotus about a civilization that had left very few remains of its existence to the present. All this information that he acquired through autopsy or by hearing stories of others or very often based on his own calculations, is given to his audience always with respect to the different way of life, with respect to the different way of thinking and acting.³ However, it does not mean that all the information he gives to us is correct and precise. So, a researcher should always be notably thoughtful about the information which would derive from this ancient text.

According to Herodotus "The Scythian kings' burial place is in the land of the Gerroi, at the point that river Borysthenes is being navigable. When the king dies, they (the

³ Xydopoulos 2010, 24.

Scythians) dig a large square hole and they carry the dead body there...".⁴ As Herodotus narrates in the rest of the same chapter, The land of Gerroi is the most distant place in Scythia. It is the northern frontier of the country, which separates the Scythians from other northern peoples. It is a Scythian border and no information is provided about the lands beyond this or about the peoples that live in those lands.⁵ The Scythians, nevertheless, prefer to bury their kings in this remote region, no matter where the king died. The Scythians were nomads and their king was the king of nomads. He did not live in a palace. He lived in a wagon, maybe in a more fancy wagon than that of the others', he was moving from one land to another, so he would die in any place in the Scythian territory. But it was already determined that he would be buried among the Gerroi.

The body of the dead king must be cleaned before the burial. The belly is cut open, cleaned from the viscera and stuffed with aromatic plants as frankincense, parsley and anise seed and sewn up again. The whole body is covered with wax. All these procedure must be followed in order the decomposition to be prevented, since the corps will travel for forty days in a wagon visiting all the Scythian tribes for the last time before its burial.⁶ All other Scythians, after their death, are carried on a wagon to all their friends by their families. Their friends give food to their visitors, but also to the dead. The corpse is buried after forty days of visits.⁷ Herodotus mention nothing about the preparation of the dead, in the case of common people, but it may be similar with that of the king's dead body, since the body stayed unburied for such a long time.

In Scythia, the dead visits his friends so that they would pay him their last respects. The living stay still but the dead is on the move. He is moving for forty days after his death to "meet" all his relatives and friends for the last time before he is buried. By this, the Scythians are declared as the ultimate nomadic people, whose death do not stop them from moving. And the Scythian king is declared the leader of the ultimate nomads, because he visits all his subjects, crossing all his country after his death, before he is buried.

After his embalming, the dead Scythian king starts his last "voyage" lying on a wagon and the land of Gerroi is his final destination. Before he reaches this land he passes through all the Scythian territory in order all the Scythian tribes, his subjects, to pay their last respects to him. After that they follow the funeral prepossession to participate to

4 Hdt. 4.71.

5 Hdt. 4.53.

6 Hdt. 4.71.

7 Hdt. 4.73.

the burial of their leader. But when they receive the king bearing wagon they use to imitate the example which is first set by the Royal Scythians, so they mutilate themselves, by chopping off a piece of their ear, by cutting their hair, or by wounding their body.⁸

The corps of the king, at last, arrives in the land of Gerroi and is laid on a mattress in the square grave. Spears are fixed on the ground, around the dead body in order to support roof of wooden beams and osier twigs. The ritual ends with the Scythians raising a huge mound above the grave, trying to outgrow the height of the previous tombs.⁹ Excavations have proved that these bury-mounds may contain more than one burial under them.¹⁰ As in the case of temple raising to Ares, the king's grave is built by totally natural material. Both buildings, the only buildings raised by the Scythian nomads, are poor constructions which were constructed with processed, solid materials as stones, bricks or plaster in order to last in time.¹¹ The Scythians tried to have the same result just by raising huge mounds of dirt, the height of which in some occasions is over 20 meters.¹²

Before the raising of this mound, a cruel procedure had taken place. The king's closest servants, that are his cup-bearer, his cook, his groom, his lackey, his messenger, one of his concubines, are being strangulated and buried around the dead king. Some horses, golden cups and other treasures are also buried next to the king.¹³ Specimens of Greek pottery, with Greek inscriptions, have also being found in excavated tombs of important Scythians,¹⁴ a fact that is contradictory to the Scythian hostility against foreign customs, but on the other hand it shows the Scythian acceptance of the Greek art. But the main thing is the sacrifice. If the king dies, some people must also die for him. His servants, who use to serve him during his life, are sacrificed in order to serve him in his grave as well. They are transformed into grave-goods, among the other treasures, to accompany him in his death.

The Scythian cruelty comes to its high point one year after the king's funeral, with a extremely barbaric, for the "civilized" cultures, ritual. Fifty of the finest servants of the king are strangulated. The viscera are removed from their belly, which are filled with hay and sewn up again. The same happens to fifty of the finest horses. Humans and horses are put around the burial-mound of the dead king (every man as a rider on his

8 Hdt. 4.71.

9 Hdt. 4.71.

10 Alekseyev 2007, 45.

11 Hartog 1988, 149.

12 Alekseyev 2007, 46.

13 Hdt. 4.71.

14 Murzin 2007, 36, Alekseyev 2007, 48, 55.

horse), using wagon wheels and stakes in order to stabilize the horses to the ground and the humans on the horses.¹⁵

Finally, Herodotus reports the purification ritual, practiced by the Scythians after the funeral. The Scythians, after they had perfumed and washed their head with soap, used a kind of steam bath to purify themselves. They used to throw hemp seeds on hot stones in a tent. The seeds started immediately to smoke, producing steam. Scythians never wash their bodies with water. Scythian women used to apply a kind of paste on their faces and bodies, made of different kind of aromatic plants, in order to purify themselves.¹⁶

1.2. Archaeological research in the Northern Black Sea region

The archaeological researches and excavations in the area which began very early, from the eighteenth century, come to complete the narration of Herodotus. The first excavations, legally and illegally, in the Scythian land had not scientific interest for the excavators. On the contrary they wanted only to abstract the most valuable objects of the graves which were expanded in a huge area between the modern Kiev of Ukraine to the Russian Kuban region in Caucasus. Certainly, the list of the lost data is increased by the action of the looters and tomb-robbers who acted in the area and disappeared a lot of their finds while more than 85% of all the kurgans were found robbed. Consequently, there are very few recorded scientific data from these early periods of excavations. Furthermore, there is archaeological evidence that many of the burials have been plundered in the ancient times even soon after the funeral.¹⁷

The situation began to change from the period of Peter the Great. From that period onwards, the scientific interest started as well the rescue efforts about all these gold findings which were found in the northern Black Sea region. Additionally, due to the superstitions and the legends which existed about some of the burial-mounds, the looters did not even try to open few of them. Thus, the archaeologists were the first who opened these closed graves, as the Chertomlyk kurgan, and managed to have a comprehensive view about the Scythian burial customs. Nowadays, the most Scythian treasures are kept in the museum of Hermitage.¹⁸

15 Hdt. 4.72.

16 Hdt. 4.75.

17 Silimirski, Taylor 1991, p. 581

18 Rolle 1980, p. 20

The Scythians were a nation consisted of many nomadic tribes who lived between the Dniester and Don rivers. The history of the Scythians¹⁹ could be divided in two periods and two different regions of act. The first period is between the seventh to sixth century in the forest steppes of the northern Black Sea region and the second is between the sixth to fourth century in the Pontic region. This is the time and the place where the Scythians became familiar with the culture of the Greek colonies of the northern Black Sea shores. In this dissertation, I will deal with the Scythian funerary customs as they have survived until the present times through the burial-mounds of the second phase of the Scythian History and more specifically with the kurgans of the Scythian elite which have been found in the Pontic region and are dated between the fifth to the end of the fourth century BC. Except for the obvious funerary customs, these burials could reflect also some of the basic structures of the Scythian community and offer the only survived archaeological evidence about the everyday life of this enigmatic tribe.²⁰

1.3. The Kurgans

First of all I should answer to the question what a kurgan is. In the eastern Europe *kurgany* are called the burial-mounds and constituted the typical form of tomb from the fifth century, in the northern Black Sea region. The Scythian kurgans were the highest and differed architecturally from the others. The Scythian kurgans could have a height over 20 meters and a diameter over 100m. Unfortunately, many kurgans have been damaged in modern times due to the intensive cultivation and as a result we have the disappearance of both the structures and their finds. Nowadays, only few examples of them have been maintained and examined.²¹

The graves under the burial-mounds constituted of one or more small chambers made of wood or limestones placed on the earth or they were burial pits digged on the earth. There were also funerary *dromoi* which were sometimes covered with masonry and led to the central grave of the kurgan²². The graves had corbel-vaulted roofs which could

19 The designation 'Scythian' is a Greek invention while they called themselves *Asguzai* or *Iskuzai*. Ivantchik 2006, 150.

20 Alekseyev 2006, p. 160

21 Rolle 1980, 19-20.

22 The use of funerary *dromoi* paved with limestones was a Hellenistic influence and developed in the region of Crimea and in Oguz kurgan on Dnieper from the fourth to third centuries B.C. Baumer 2012, 251.

be two-sided, three-sided, four-sided or even dome-shaped. Additionally, there were the circular graves also. In the northern Black Sea steppes some of the kurgans are known as “catacombs” and this is a term that has nothing to do with the Early Christian Catacombs. These graves had a vertical shaft which was connected with the underground grave chamber directly or through a corridor. The main grave could be divided in many apartments and it could have many niches. In kurgans, which were built for the Scythian elite, the shaft could reach the 12m in depth and the corridor the 30m in length, as in the Alexandropol kurgan. Originally, the kurgans must be compact constructions which were held on their base with retaining walls.²³

The kurgans, which were uncovered in the northern Black Sea region, were high constructions, rich in grave goods. Gold and silver vessels, weapons, jewelry and other gifts to the deceased as animals (dogs and horses) or even humans had been revealed inside them while the new under-world for the dead was the mirror of his or her daily Scythian real life and social status. Mistresses, wives, warriors, servants, stable-boys or children were killed²⁴ and placed inside the kurgan in the place they had in their real life as company and service to the dead in the other world.²⁵ Of course, these finds of human and animal sacrifices reinforce also the truth of the words of Herodotus.

Over the grave a burial-mound constituted of soil was built. It is interesting that the material which covered the kurgans on the Ukrainian steppes was consisted only of black earth. Except for the huge quantities of soil which were over 400m³, the grave was constructed also by layers of grass which were over seventy-five hectares. These layers were placed in order one over the other. The quantities of soil and the grass were brought miles away from the burial place. Perhaps this transport constituted part of the burial customs and these parts of earth indicated a special bond of the dead with a special place. A further examination of the ingredients of the mound in the Tolstaya Mogila kurgan brought to light the remains of 35 horses, 14 wild boars and 2 stags. The remains testify a number of funeral rites which took place over the mound in short period of time.²⁶ The large height of the kurgans made them visible from far away. However, the height of the burial-mounds had usually nothing to do with the social class of the deceased while under some burial-mounds more than one burials have been uncovered, one over the other. Nevertheless, the highest and richest in findings kurgans, which called “Royal Kurgans”,

23 Meyer 2013, 272.

24 The murder of the servants might happened inside the grave chamber, in the place where they were found while some marks of violence were visible during the process of their uncover.

25 Rolle 2006, 170, 174

26 Rolle 1980, 30- 34.

contained burials of high quality. As far as the bodies are concerned, they were not cremated but buried inside a chamber room.²⁷

Most of this information about the preparing of the dead bodies comes from the Herodotus narration and it refers specifically to the preparation of the bodies of the kings. According to Herodotus, the bodies of the dead “kings” were embalmed and followed a specific procedure of mummification in order to be preserved for the period of forty days in which they visited the members of all the tribe. The procedure of the mummification is described in every detail by Herodotus but there is a debate between the scholars about the translation of Herodotus terms and the exact materials which were used for this purpose. Unfortunately, none of these “mummies” had been preserved inside the Scythian Kurgans. The scholars could gain some knowledge about this procedure from the mummies which were uncovered in the southwestern Siberia on the border with Kazakhstan inside some not genuine Scythian burials as the kurgans of Pazyryk. But even these mummies had not been studied thoroughly and their embalming ingredients inside the bodies have not been examined yet.²⁸

Scythian women and children were equal in the burial customs while they could have their own kurgan as men did. This observation which is based on findings could lead to the conclusion that women and men had equal treatment in the Scythian society. It suffices to consider that many graves with female warriors have been uncovered in the Scythian land. These women could be described as “Amazons” because of their weaponry which accompanied them to their graves.²⁹

Usually, an anthropomorphic statue made of stone was placed in the top of the kurgan as a symbol for the grave. The statues depicted an armed Scythian warrior. The depictions of the weapons are so clearly sculptured that the statues can be dated precisely. The facial characteristics were raggedly worked and distinguished only the eyes, the mouth, the nose and the mustache. More than hundred such statues dated between seventh and fourth centuries BC, have been found near the burial-mounds or even far away from them and only one have been found in its original place, in the top of a kurgan. These statues are defined as ancestors of the dead residence of the grave and they depicted holding the typical Scythian weapons as sword and a gorytos with bows and arrows. Sometimes, the statues were more than two meters high. The tradition to place an anthropomorphic statue in the top of the tombs continued in the region of Eurasia until the

27 Alekseyev 2007, 45

28 Rolle 1980, 28.

29 Rolle 2006, 175

late Middle Ages.³⁰

From the fourth to the very beginning of the third century BC, the Scythian burial architecture followed the Hellenistic models, in the area of Crimea. Now on, the burial-mounds which remained very high, had a funerary *dromos* made of elaborated limestone slabs which led to a central crypt with a corbelled vault. Inside the crypt there was a stone sarcophagus for the dead. The deceased was accompanied by the usual Scythian grave-goods as horses and precious objects. According to the Hellenistic tradition, some kurgans had also painted walls with scenes of hunting and sacrifice or lamentation scenes.

An example of this type of grave is the first tomb of the kurgan 1 of the “Three Brothers Kurgans”. The burial is a Scythian kurgan with obvious the Greek influences. The grave is dated in 300 BC and belonged to a Scythian woman who was found in the burial chamber lying down on a stone deathbed. A coin as fee to Charon, a stone altar, golden jewelry and a limestone votive stele have been found inside the grave. The stele depicted a woman inside a temple. In front of her, in a lower level, there were a chariot with four horses and a hostler (fig.1).³¹

Considering the finds inside the kurgan or even the same architectural constructions of the graves we can draw the conclusion that the Scythians apart from a nomadic tribe with great fighting skills and excellent warriors had also some great architects who constructed all these huge graves and great artists who created all these precious artifacts. Their nomadic style of life is reflected in the art in which the animals and especially the horses have a key role.

1.3.1. The Royal Kurgans

The most famous of all the Scythian tribes were the Royal Scythians who lived, according to Herodotus, beyond the river Gerrhus. Herodotus also reports that the funerary “Valley of Kings” was also located in the land of Gerroi between the Dnieper and Don rivers. However, only five Scythian kurgans with a height of about sixteen to twenty-one meters have been uncovered in the northern Black Sea, in the north Pontic region. The burials are dated from the first decade of the fifth to the late fourth century BC. These kurgans have been called “Royal Kurgans” due to their impressive sizes and the valuable

30 Baumer 2012, 238, Rolle 1980, 36.

31 Baumer 2012, 251-252

findings of their interiors. Four of them, the Solokha (18-19 meters high), Chertomlyk (19.5-22 meters high), Oguz (21 meters high) and Alexandropol (20 meters high) kurgans, have been already excavated and only the last one, the Nechaeva Mogila kurgan (17 meters high), remains uninvestigated.³² The majority of these kurgans belonged to the individual rulers of the late fifth and fourth century and not to the great Scythian kings of the fifth century as Ariapeithes (490-460 BC) or Scyles (460-440 BC) for whom none of the great “Royal Kurgans” had been built.

There are two explanations in the question why the first great kurgans appeared in the late fifth century. The first is that the burial custom of the huge burial-mounds began in the last decade of the fifth century in the Scythian history and tradition, perhaps as a loan from another culture. Thus, the Scythian kings of the sixth and fifth century could be buried in the not impressive burials of the steppe region which were about 3 to 4 meters height, obvious much smaller than the “Royal Kurgans”. The second hypothetical explanation is that these Scythian kings could be buried far away from the Scythian land.³³

In general, as it has been reported above, the architectural plan of the kurgans was pretty much similar. The kurgans for the “kings” consists of a corridor sometimes with steps which went 10-15 meters down into the earth leading from the surface of the ground through an arched opening to the grave chamber. These passages which looked like tunnels could be short or even could reach the 30 meters in length. The grave chambers were usually round capacious rooms with niches or other scarfs in their walls. After the funeral all the tunnels were filled in with soil and the mound over the burial began to be built. The Scythians followed the same procedure every time they wanted to add a new member in the grave. The difficult part was to find the same place in which the first burial was. Perhaps this is the reason why there are more than one grave chambers under the same kurgans.³⁴

The Solokha kurgan is the earliest “Royal Kurgan” in the northern Black Sea region and is dated between the end of the fifth to the early fourth century. Two burials have been found inside the kurgan. The first burial was found looted and it is dated 420-400 BC. On the other hand, the second burial remained undisturbed until the time the archaeologists opened it. This grave contained many precious objects as the famous golden comb with the depiction of three warriors in a scene of battle, vessels and weapons. It is dated between 400 and 375 BC. In the period between 370 and 340 some

32 Alekseyev 2006, 160

33 Alekseyev 2007, 40-45, Alekseyev 2006, 163

34 Rolle 1980, 22-24

smaller tombs have been built in the region with not a monumental character.

Chronologically, the next “Royal Kurgan” is Chertomlyk which was erected between 340 and 320 BC. Inside this kurgan two burials have been found and each burial contained more than one skeletons. The first burial is dated between 340 and 320 BC. The second is dated later and it seems that had nothing in common with the first burial. Moreover, one more skeleton has been found in the entrance of this burial-mound which belonged to a grave robber who tried unsuccessfully to enter inside the kurgan. The robber was killed by a landslide. The first burial had four or five grave chambers and was found partly plundered. Because of the robbers, only few traces have been uncovered from the first chamber. Overall, traces of a coffin, a quivers and shafts, many, golden plates which were characteristic for the decoration of the Scythian clothes, vessels and even remains of a carpet have been found inside the chambers of the first burial. Moreover, ten horse skeletons and the graves of two grooms have been found near the first burial. Furthermore, skeletons of humans and horses have been uncovered around the base of the burial mound and it remains unknown if they were killed and placed there for religious reasons or just for the avoidance of aspiring grave robbers.³⁵ Anyway, the traces testify the great importance of the deceased inside the burial.

The kurgans of Oguz and Alexandropol contained several burials and were built in the period 330-300. The Oguz kurgan was a large square grave with a corbeled vault. Inside the grave there were three niches at the sides of the stone walls. In the northern niche a woman's skeleton was found, in the western niche two skeletons were found and the eastern was found empty. Unfortunately, the kurgan have been plundered many times in the past and many of the archaeological evidence have been lost.³⁶ One more kurgan from the Crimea region could be added to the list of the “Royal Kurgans”. This is the Kul-Oba kurgan which is dated between 350 to 300 BC.³⁷

Apart from the “Kings”, similar but simpler graves the Scythian warriors and members of the Scythian elite, men and women also had. Except for the horses and other precious artifacts which accompanied the deceased, weapons were dedicated to the warriors and wagons to the women.³⁸

35 Rolle 2006, 174.

36 Minns 1913, 156-157.

37 Alekseyev 2007, 46, Alekseyev 2006, 161.

38 Only in one woman's burial have been uncovered weapons, from more than hundred graves which have been excavated in Scythia. Baumer 2012, 238.

1.3.2. The grave-goods of the Royal Kurgans

Inside the kurgans, numerous precious gold and silver artifacts as vessels, jewelry and weapons have been uncovered. Most of the finds of the Pontic kurgans which are dated between the fifth to the late fourth centuries present an interesting peculiarity. The contact between the Greek citizens of the new colonies in the Black Sea region around the Bosphoran Kingdom and the Scythians, who preexisted in the area, creates an interesting interaction between these two cultures mainly in the fourth century BC. As a result of this co-existence is the creation of a “mixed culture” which is reflected by the burial artifacts. The artists of these artifacts could be Scythians who had Greek influences or Greeks who were addressed to a Scythian audience. Thus, apart from the pure Scythian style findings which have been uncovered inside the kurgans, a large number of artifacts which have been influenced by the Greek style of art, have been revealed too.

The depictions of animals, which defined the Scythian art with obvious influences from the oriental tradition of the Near East and western Asia, were replaced by more naturalistic and anthropomorphic motifs after the Greek influence in the fourth century BC. The “monsters” of the Scythian animal style art as the deers, the felines, the birds or even fantastic animals were framed by depictions of humans and new types of animals which were famous in the depictions of the Greek art as griffins, sphinxes and winged horses. Furthermore, other Greek favorite figures as satyrs, gorgons, deities or even depictions of human figures in daily life scenes appeared in the Scythian artifacts.³⁹

Due to the depictions of the Scythians in the artifacts which were found inside the kurgans, the scholars can even recreate the external appearance of the ancient Scythians. Commonly, they were depicted wearing cavalry clothing, they had long elaborate hair and beard and they wore jewelry. Owing to the new finds of weapons which were revealed out of the Scythian kurgans, the scholars could have now a more comprehensive view about their armament and equipment. Therefore, the Scythians were not only skillful horsemen and archers but their army was supported by heavily equipped men. Nowadays, this theory is confirmed by the new findings of the archaeologists in the area who uncover more and more graves of warriors with iron-plated armours.⁴⁰

Generally speaking, the depicted scenes and the themes of the decoration of the fourth century and onwards present differences from the originally Scythian ones of the

³⁹ Treister 2007, 56-61.

⁴⁰ Rolle 2006, 175.

sixth and fifth centuries. As regards specifically to the art of Scythian jewelry between the seventh to fifth century, a new study of Scythian Gold shows that the influence of the Greeks in the development of this art in these first years of the co-existence was not of so great importance as it was believed. This happened because the presence of the Greeks was limited in the coastal region of the Black Sea where there were the Greek colonies and not to the hinterland. The situation began to change from the fourth century onwards when the Greek craftsmen or even Scythians who followed the Greek style, developed better techniques. Their products became the best in quality and gained great demand in the wider Scythian market. Thus, the products in the Greek style predominated as gifts for the dead Scythians.⁴¹

Undoubtedly, the most famous and better preserved grave-goods from the Scythian burial-mounds are the numerous golden jewelries which have been uncovered in the Royal kurgans. After researches in their finds, it is speculated that the jewelries which have been found inside the burials of the Scythian elite have been produced after their death. This hypothesis could be the answer to the question why these jewelries have been found in such an excellent condition.⁴²

This co-existence in the same area of the two neighboring nations, the Scythians and the Greeks led to the creation of new style of art in the fourth century BC, the so-called Greco-Scythian⁴³, which was a mixture of these two cultures and was produced in several workshops. Themes from the daily life became more popular and replaced the predominant military that were the favorite before the Greek influence. The Scythians borrowed also the style of the naked men depictions. An example could be the decoration of the gold gorytos of Chertomlyk with scenes of the life of Achilles.

Additionally, three identical gorytoi to this of Chertomlyk, have been found in the royal kurgans of Ilinty, Melitopol and the eighth kurgan of the 'Five Brothers' (fig.2). These four gorytoi have been found in the northern Black Sea region but far from each other. Although, they should be constructed in the same Greek workshop or in a Scythian workshop which followed the Greek style of art, between 350 to 300 BC. However, it is certain that these objects were intended for non Greek customers.⁴⁴ One more similar to the above gorytoi, the fifth of this group, was found far away from the Black Sea. It was found in the antechamber of the grave of Phillip II of Macedonia, in Vergina (fig.3).⁴⁵ The

41 Redfern 2012, 27.

42 Redfern 2012, 69.

43 Treister 2007, 56-61.

44 Jacobson 1995, 230.

45 Baumer 2012, 249-251.

question why five different rulers, four Scythians and one Macedonian, had this kind of weapon in their graves, depicting scenes from the Greek mythology which should be unfamiliar to the Scythian tradition, remained unanswered. I will try to deal with this find and answer why and how it was found there in the next chapter of this dissertation.

In the first half of the fourth century Greek craftsmen and artists should have immigrated to the new Pontic colonies and worked in the local market. An analysis to the workshops could show that southern Italians and Macedonians may be the imported metalworkers and jewelers in the northern Black Sea region⁴⁶. Several artefacts have been identified as products of specific workshops and took conventional names as the “Workshop of the Solokha phiale” or the “Workshop of the Kul-Oba vessel”. However, the questions if the artists were Greeks, Scythians or Greco-Scythians and if these workshops worked only for Scythian customers, remain unanswered.⁴⁷

2.The Macedonian Tombs

2.1. The Greek burial customs according to Herodotus' narration and other written sources

Herodotus, in his fourth book of *Histories*, stresses to the Greek audience the differences between Scythians and Greeks.⁴⁸ His narration acts as a mirror to the Greeks, who understood immediately their superiority over the Scythians without any derogatory comment of Herodotus. In Greece the existence of the city and the people's civic consciousness alters dramatically the way of thinking and living. The people were not buried inside the city walls. That was a general rule existing in Greek cities, but there were exceptions in this rule, as, for example, the cities of Megara and Tarentum, and also the case of children in general. Things were different for heroes of war or for the founders of the cities. They used to be buried in the central point of the city, the *agora*. the center of

46 For example the pectoral from Tolstaya Mogila resembles with similar finds from Thrace, Katerini, Pydna and Vergina in Macedonia. Moreover, the frieze with animals of the pectoral is identical with the frieze of the crater from Derveni.

47 Treister 2007, 61.

48 Hdt 4.69-4.73.

democracy, the center of trade and political debates. They used to be buried also in the city's walls and especially in the gate, a fact that increased the defense of the city, as it was believed. The burial of the heroes in the frontiers of the territory served this same purpose, that is the defense of the city and the avoidance of invasions. Finally, by no means the bones or the arms of the dead hero should not be in the enemy's hands. Everyone who had the possession of these, immediately obtained superiority and had a clear advantage to the victory. So the hero had to be buried in a secret place.⁴⁹

In Greece the dead body was washed, oiled and dressed, by the relatives or by elderly women, and put on a bed the day after the death. Relatives and friends would visit the dead to mourn and to pay their last respects for one day, and after this the body would be buried. The Greeks did not have to embalm their dead. They use to bury the body the next day of the death, so it was enough to clean and oil the body and to dress it with clothes. The embalmed king, who was killed in battle away from his country, is an exception to the general rule of embalming rejection in Greece. All other soldiers, except for the king, who were killed in war in a foreign country, used to be buried in the land that they fell.⁵⁰

In the Greek cities, the mourning of the dead by the relatives was measured and restrained. Mutilation was not practiced, since the civic way of thinking suggests that "the bodily integrity of the citizens must be preserved".⁵¹ In Sparta, although, people used to bit themselves violently in funerals, but this is a far away from mutilation. Tortures also used to be practiced in Greece, but only on the slaves in the case of an investigation. The Greeks also did not use to sacrifice in funerals. It was forbidden for them, by Solon's law, to sacrifice animals to the dead.

In Athens, loud lament and exaggerations in general, were funeral practices of a past age, and specifically, of the age before Solon's legislation. This legislation prohibited "harsh and barbaric practices", including beating one's breast, laceration of the flesh etc. The mourning of the dead was organized and practiced only by the family or by women over sixty years of age. In other Greek cities, like Sparta, funeral was not so silent. People used to mourn their dead loudly and long, reminding tragedy practices. Similar were the Persian lament customs.⁵²

49 Hartog 1988, 134-137.

50 Hartog 1988, 141-153.

51 Hartog 1988, 142.

52 Hartog 1988, 142-155.

2.2. The Macedonian burial customs as they arise from the archaeological finds

Apart from Herodotus, numerous Greek ancient written sources provide us with information about the Greek funerary customs. Unfortunately, the majority of them describes and refers to the burial customs of Southern Greece. But as regards to the region of Macedonia, which is the field of this dissertation, Arrian⁵³ and Plutarch⁵⁴ describe many burial customs of the Macedonians.⁵⁵ Even Plato, who describes some memorial ceremonies in the middle of the fourth century, which were held in great and luxurious graves, could have in mind the Macedonian funerary customs and buildings. He describes some big, underground, barrel vaulted graves, which contained stone beds in their burial chambers, and were hidden under soil tumuli^{56, 57}. The description is clear enough and undoubtedly brings in mind the burial constructions of the Macedonian tombs.⁵⁸

Regarding to the funeral customs, there are some differences between southern Greece and Macedonia, especially in the field of the funerary architecture. It is quite possible that these differences could arise from the different political regimes, which were established in these two regions. The city-states of the central Greece were governed by democratic regimes, while Macedonia was ruled by royal regimes. Thus, the royal families and aristocracy would differ from the lower social layers, even in death, by showing off their wealth. On the other hand, in the democratic regimes, the citizens were equal in life and death and the extremities were forbidden. Although, the best guide to a secure conclusion would be the archaeological finds in the Macedonian tombs, which help the researchers to understand and create a more complete opinion about all these traditions. Unfortunately, the majority of the Macedonian Tombs have been found looted. Thus, the unlooted Macedonian Tombs, especially at Vergina, are an important source of information about the funeral customs in Macedonia.

The death for the Macedonians, as for the other Greeks, was a very important issue. It was the transition to another situation, perhaps to another form of life through this “sleep” state. The funeral of a dead was not just the procedure of the burial in a tomb but it was constituted by some standard traditional customs and obligations for the family of the

53 Arrian, VII 14.

54 Plutarch, LIII 1-3.

55 Sismanides 1997, 228.

56 Plato, 947d-e.

57 Gossel 1980, 17.

58 Some researchers argue that the Macedonian tombs and the funeral practices had nothing in common with the rest of central Greece and Chalkidiki and had more in common with the cemeteries like in Vitsa Zagoriou. Whitley 2001, 406-408.

deceased. A number of preparatory processes preceded before the final burial of the deceased, which is usual in most of the societies, worldwide.

Therefore, the most famous of the burial procedures were, according to the existing written sources, the preparation, *prothesis*, *thrinós* (lament), *ekphorá* and finally the inhumation or the cremation of the deceased. Due to the archaeological finds, the burial beds, the *klinai*, were used widely in Macedonia and they constituted a basic element in the burial procedure, while numerous of them have been found inside the Macedonian tombs. Thus, it is believed that the procedures of the *prothesis* and *ekphorá*, which were connected to the use of these *klinai*, were common in the Macedonian burial tradition too. Moreover, the information we have from written sources about the burial procedures, which were attributed to some posterior Macedonian nobles as Hephaestion and Demetrius Poliorcetes, could be an extra clue about the earlier ceremonies in the Macedonian tombs.⁵⁹

Due to the written sources and the archaeological finds, the researchers are able to describe the typical steps of the burial procedure. The first step of all the burial procedures and after the first announcement of the death, was the preparation of the body of the deceased. The process of the preparation of the dead included the hair cut, the hair washing, the spreading of the body with oils and fragrances, the dressing and the adornment with flowers and jewelry. According to Demosthenes, the old women, which were in the age of sixty years, were responsible for the preparation of the dead body.⁶⁰ Furthermore, apart from the written sources, many additional information about the funeral customs could derive from the observation of the funeral depicted scenes on vessels. The scene of the *prothesis* was the most common of these topics, even from the Geometric era.

The second day of the funeral was dedicated to the *prothesis* and the lament of the dead. The dead body was placed on a wooden bed, in the middle of a room, where the relatives and friends visited the deceased for the last time. The ceremonial of the lament lasted all the day of the *prothesis*. During the procedure of the *prothesis*, the dead was placed with their feet turned to the exit of the house, while they were placed in the opposite way inside their graves. This practice had a symbolic character in the ancient world as the dead left behind his earthly home and passed into a new after-death condition in a new home, the grave.⁶¹

59 Sismanides 1997, 227-228.

60 Sismanides 1997, 235.

61 Sismanides 1997, 236-237.

However, the finds of skeletons from the Macedonian tombs confirm that there were not any standard rules for the placement of the bodies inside these graves. Perhaps this particularity had to do with the size of the Macedonian tombs, which were bigger than the other Greek tombs. Usually, in case of the Macedonian tombs with one *kline*, the bodies were placed in parallel with the back wall of the grave and they looked at one of the side walls and not at the door. Similarly, in case of two or three burials inside the same tomb, where the *klinai* had a Γ-shape or Π-shape, it was also impossible for the bodies to have the same direction.⁶²

Finally, the funeral of the deceased, the so called *ekphora*, was the last of the burial procedures and took place the next day of the *prothesis*, the third day after the death. Friends and relatives accompanied the deceased to their grave, where the bodies could be buried or burned. In case of inhumation, the body was transferred from the wooden *kline* of the *ekphora* to a stony *kline* inside the burial chamber. It is confirmed by the archaeological finds from the unlooted Macedonian tombs and from the vessels with this kind of depiction, that some of the personal objects of the dead and some consumable items for their long travel were placed by the dead body's side, as well as vessels with fragrances against the malodorous of the decay of the corpses.⁶³ In the tombs, Macedonian or simple cist-tombs, the presence of terracotta vessels was very common. These vessels should service all the needs (utilitarian, symbolic or religious) of the funerary procedure. However, most of the vessels inside a tomb belonged to the category of the symposium vessels. Generally speaking, the grave-goods inside the tombs were personal belongings of the deceased, such as weapons or jewelry, and practical objects, which serviced to the funerary procedure, such as vessels.⁶⁴

On the other hand, in case of cremation, the fire had already been prepared outside the grave and this fact shows that the type of burial (inhumation or cremation) was decided before the final funeral. Some researchers believe that the type of burial could be a wish of the same dead or even their relatives. The archaeological finds shows that some of the personal objects of the deceased and several other things were burned in the funeral fire, except for the bodies and their clothes. These objects could have a relation with the ceremonies of the *prothesis* and *ekphora* which had already been preceded. Terracotta vessels and figurines or even objects that they did not leave traces after their burning, such as fabrics, could be some of such objects. After the burning, the relatives

62 Sismanides 1997, 231.

63 Sismanides 1997, 228-230. Drougou 2005, 21-22.

64 Drougou 2005, 23, 177, 180-181.

collected the burned bones, washed them, covered them with fabrics, put them in *larnaxes* (wooden or metal boxes for the bones) and finally placed them on the *klinai* or the thrones of the tombs.⁶⁵

According to the archaeological finds of the Macedonian tombs until now, it could be said that in case of cremation, the *larnaxes* were placed on wooden *klinai* inside the tombs. Otherwise, in case of inhumation, the bodies were placed on stony beds. Perhaps, this practice had to do with the knowledge of the Macedonians about the strength of the materials in time, in combination with the decomposition and perishability of the body after death.

Generally speaking, someone could notice that the choice between inhumation or cremation had not always financial criteria, because both burial practices had high costs. On the one hand, the cost for the cremation's fire was really high and on the other hand the cost for the construction of a stony bed was high too.⁶⁶ Specifically, in the cases of the Macedonian tombs, the choice between the one way of burial or the other, had to do with ideological and symbolic reasons.⁶⁷ In the cases of cremation, the correlation of this burial way with heroic and epic traditions was obvious.⁶⁸ However, especially in the case of the cemetery of the Macedonian tombs at Vergina, the inhumation was the most popular way of burial while the cremation was a special and luxurious way of burial and it had been used specifically in the rich royal tombs.⁶⁹

As a conclusion, it could be said that the tombs in the Macedonian land, either the simple cist tombs or the luxurious Macedonian, followed generally the same funerary traditions. The differentiations, which observed, stressed mainly the differences in the social and financial status of the deceased and not their religious beliefs. The simpler tombs presented the typical current customs of the funeral tradition, while the Macedonian tombs presented the luxurious funerary procedure through a modern political perception. However, there are some common points in the basic practices of both types of tombs Macedonian or simple tombs, such as the use of the raw limestones in the funerary masonry⁷⁰

65 Sismanides 1997, 229.

66 Sismanides 1997, 230.

67 Gosse, 1980, 66.

68 Themelis-Touratsoglou 1997, 142.

69 Drougou 2005, 14.

70 Drougou 2005, 183.

2.3. The Macedonian Tombs

Numerous archaeological researches and excavations have been made in the region of the central northern Greece since the 19th century. Most of them, were scientific and followed a systematic way of work. Usually, the most important remains of the past are found in the cemeteries and the graves are the main source of information about the ancient civilizations. Of course, as in the most ancient cemeteries worldwide, many of the graves were found looted. The archaeological researches in the Macedonian land brought to light several types of burial structures as cist tombs, rock cut tombs and a special category of graves, the so-called Macedonian Tombs. In this dissertation, I will deal especially with the last type of the graves, the Macedonian tombs.

The Macedonian tombs which were the graves of the Macedonian elite and aristocracy, were luxurious burial structures. These type of tombs have been found, except from the region of Macedonian, in Thrace, Thessaly, Asia Minor and Euboea too. The Macedonian tombs had been evolved between the middle of the fourth century and 168 BC but the majority of the excavated tombs is dated between the third and second centuries B.C.⁷¹ In the center of the Macedonian land, and simultaneously the first capital and later royal necropolis of the Macedonian kingdom, at Vergina, eleven Macedonian Tombs have been uncovered so far.⁷² However, in the Hellenistic era, the presence of the Macedonian Tombs at Vergina decreased and they became smaller and simpler.⁷³

The Macedonian Tombs are chamber graves constructed of local limestone and rarely of marble. The Macedonian tombs had barrel-vaulted (semi-cylindrical) roofs and compelling quasi-facades. Every tomb had a unique facade and there were significant differences from tomb to tomb. The facades of the tombs were decorated with a mixture, in the same front wall, of a variety of Ionic and/or Doric architectural elements, such as columns and pediments. The result of this decoration gave the impression of a temple's facade. Tombs, constructed in the Ionic order have been found at Vergina, Langada and Lefkadia, while Doric burial structures are the tombs which have been uncovered at Laina, on the Monastir Road in Thessaloniki and the royal tomb at Vergina.⁷⁴

As regards the architectural forms of the roofs of the Macedonian tombs, some scholars believed that the technique of the barrel vaulted roof was introduced to the

71 Müller-Wiener 1995, 195.

72 Saatsoglou-Paliadeli 2011, 288.

73 Drougou 2005, 14.

74 Winter 2006, 87.

Macedonians after the Alexander's expedition in Asia. Nowadays, this notion is considered totally wrong and outdated, while the archaeological discovery of a Macedonian barrel vaulted tomb, the "Tomb of Eurydice" at Aegae, which is safely dated in 340 BC, has proved that the knowledge of this architectural form was already known to the Macedonians before Alexander's campaign.⁷⁵ Gossel believes that the Macedonian tombs followed a local tradition which was not related to the burial traditions of the Asia, while remains of earlier graves have been found under the most of the Macedonian tombs.⁷⁶ Apart from the roofs, these graves had many other peculiarities.

Every Macedonian tomb was unique. There were many variations in the plan of the main burial chamber which could be rectangular or square and/or in the dimensions of the grave which were varied from six square meters to sixteen square meters. The graves could be partially or entirely underground. However, all the structure was hidden under tones of soil. Some graves had one burial chamber and others had two, a forechamber and the main burial room⁷⁷. The burials in the antechamber were rare.⁷⁸ Sometimes, there was also a funerary *dromos* in front of the tomb. The *dromos* was a passage, a road which led from the ground level to the entrance of the grave and serviced to the ceremonial procedure. The *dromoi* were paved with stone plates or they were covered just with soil. Usually, vertical limestone walls were constructed to the left and to the right of the tomb's facade. These walls had the capacity to hold the soil, which would otherwise collapse in front of the tomb.

One interesting element in the decoration of the Macedonian tombs was their facades. Because of these decorations, the entrances of the Macedonian tombs have lost their original function as simple entrance points to the burial structure and they mentioned and described only as facades.⁷⁹ So, these facades were decorated with "flat panels, relief figures or applied architectural elements that were executed in painted stucco"⁸⁰. The facades imitated the front part of a prostyle temple or a temple in antis and gave the illusion of a real building. An example of the illusion of a prostyle temple appeared on the Vergina Tomb, which is also known to the archaeologists as the "Rhomaioi's Tomb", dated

⁷⁵ Saatsoglou-Paliadeli 2011, 289.

⁷⁶ Gossel 1980, 7-9

⁷⁷ The excavation of the Kasta Tomb, which takes place at this time in Amphipolis, has uncovered a luxurious, remarkable and extraordinary Macedonian tomb which constitutes from four chambers. While this excavation is now in progress, none conclusion could be drawn. http://www.yppo.gr/2/g22.jsp?obj_id=58894

⁷⁸ Traces of burials in the antechamber have been found in a tomb at Amphipolis and in the "Phillip's Tomb" at Vergina. Andronikos 1984, 221.

⁷⁹ Gossel 1980, 22.

⁸⁰ Winter 2006, 87.

in the first half of the third century BC (fig.4).⁸¹ Additionally, an example of a tomb's facade, which created the illusion of a temple in antis was this of the Great Tomb, at Lefkadia. The tomb will be described in more details in the next paragraph. However, there were also the examples of the tombs with simpler forms of ornamentation in their facades, which had only a pair of columns, such as on the Macedonian tomb of Hagios Athanasios (fig.5), or even a couple of pilasters placed at the two ends of the frontage, such as in the Macedonian tomb of Thessaloniki. Anyway, the simplest architectural decoration of a tomb facade could only be the door with its lintel. An example of such a simple facade is the "Tomb of Lysson and Kallikles" at Lefkadia.

A more complex style of facade could have had parts of an engaged architectural order, Ionic or Doric. Sometimes, elements of these two orders could be used in combination. However, the Corinthian order is unknown to the Macedonian tombs, which came to light until now. Perhaps this order was unfamiliar and unpopular to the Macedonians. An example of a tomb, which had in the decoration of its facade a combination of the Ionic and Doric orders, is the "Great Tomb" at Lefkadia, which was dated in the later fourth century BC and was excavated in 1950s (fig.6). The entire building of the "Great Tomb" was constructed by local limestone. The facade of this tomb was two-storeyed, while the interior of the tomb had only one floor. The facade was 8,55m high and 8,68m wide.⁸² Moreover, as regards the external painted ornamentation of the tomb, the facade of its lower storey was decorated with four figures, two on each side of the door-open. The figure of the deceased and the god Hermes were depicted to the left of the entrance, while Aeacus and Rhadamanthys, the two judges of the underworld, were depicted to the right of the entrance.⁸³ All the figures were turned and looked to the door open of the tomb. Above the architrave, there was a frieze which had two triglyphs, one above the other. The eleven metopae of the tomb depicted fights between Lapiths and Centaurs. The lower storey was crowned by a Doric cornice which had a painted decoration. The upper storey of the tomb was in the Ionic order. A frieze, 70m high, which was in the lower part of the second storey, depicted a battle between Macedonians and Persians. The frieze was crowned by an Ionic cornice, over which there were six Ionic half-columns. And finally, the intercolumnar spaces were also decorated by seven quasi-doors.

Furthermore, the columns/pilasters of a tomb facade could be full and regular or

81 Andronikos 1984, 33.

82 Winter 2006, 87-88.

83 Borza 1990, 271.

carved plaster reliefs of half-columns and capitals or just painted elements or even a combination of all the above architectural elements. Namely, the combination of real architectural parts with reliefs and/or painting elements prevailed in the facades. An example of such a combination could be the drawing from the destroyed Macedonian tomb at Vergina, the so-called Palatitsia or Heuzey's Tomb which was uncovered from Heuzey in the nineteenth century. In the drawings of H. Daumet could be distinguished the pilaster capitals which should be fully carved in relief and their columns which should be painted in the surface of the facade. This tomb was dated in the second half of the third century BC⁸⁴.

Summarizing, it could be said that the architectural parts were placed in the frontal surface of the Macedonian tombs in such a way, where a real building could not be supported on them and it would have had static problems. Generally speaking, the architectural parts in the facades as columns, pilasters and entablatures, had only a decorative character and not a supporting function.

However, there were some Doric tombs which left out any use of columns and kept only the entablature. In these cases, the front wall of the tomb was undecorated and only the entablature crowned the tomb (as in the Macedonian tomb at Dion). However, there is a category of tombs, in which the friezes ended to cropped metopae, something that created a weird result, some examples of such facades detected in the Kinch Tomb (fig.7) and in the Pydna Tomb. Finally, there is also the category of the tombs, in which the frieze was so cropped that they looked like an enlarged lintel above the door open. Such an example is the Haliakmon tomb.⁸⁵

Similarly to the external walls, the interior walls of the graves were decorated in many different ways. The most common decorations were the decorated bands, the mythological scenes, the imitation of architectural parts (as columns, pilasters and entablatures), the simple painted surfaces or even nothing at all.⁸⁶ There are many examples of decorated tombs in the region of Macedonia. A well known example is the fresco from the cist "Tomb of Persephone" at Vergina (fig.8). One of the wall paintings depicted the abduction of Persephone by Pluto⁸⁷ in the technique of chiaroscuro. Pluto grasped the naked Persephone who asked terrified for help. The third character in the scene is the god Hermes who guided them to the underworld kingdom. This theme, which was connected to the descent to Hades and therefore to death, was a favorite choice for

84 Andronikos 1984, 35.

85 Miller 1982, 154-159.

86 Miller 1982, 153.

87 Andronikos 1984, 91.

the decoration of the tombs and according to some scientists, especially for female burials⁸⁸. Very recently, the similar theme of the abduction of Persephone, has been uncovered in the mosaic floor of the third burial chamber of the Kasta Tomb at Amphipolis (fig.9). Three characters are depicted in the mosaic, the gods Hermes and Pluto and the daughter of the goddess Demetra, Persephone. As in Vergina's fresco, Hermes, the guide of the souls, is leading the chariot of Pluto in which the kidnapped Persephone raised her hand in fear of her life. This is a very interesting and unique example of a burial floor mosaic decoration. This burial mound, in which the excavation is in progress these days, is a very luxurious tomb for an important person of the Macedonian kingdom. Until now the owner of this tomb remains unknown.⁸⁹

Furthermore, another unique example of an interior burial decoration is the Macedonian "Tomb of Lysson and Kallikles" near Lefkadia, dated in the second half of the third century BC. The tomb, which could be characterized as a family tomb, took his name from the two deceased brothers, who were buried with their third brother, Aristophanes, in the same grave. The last brother should have died later than the first two. The names of the dead are known because of the descriptions which were painted over their graves. The wives of the three brothers were buried under them and other relatives were buried in the niches of the two side walls. The walls of the main burial chamber were decorated with square painted pilasters and a continuous painted garland from pilaster to pilaster. In addition, the orthostates imitated marble masonry and the two lunettes of the south and north walls of the burial chamber were decorated with the illustrations of Macedonian armors and weapons, such as panoplies, shields, helmets and swords (fig.10). These soldierly depictions could testify the military ability or occupation of the family's men. Furthermore, an altar and a perirrhanterion were depicted in the western and the eastern walls of the antechamber. Overall, in the decoration of the tomb, there is an effort of the depiction of the third dimension. Miller believes and, if I am allowed to say, I agree with her, that the decoration of the tomb reminds the Second Style of decoration of the Roman world. However, there is a gap over a century from the erection of the "Lysson and Kallikles Tomb" to the earliest example of the Second Roman Style, something that calls into question this thought.⁹⁰

Usually, except for the wall paintings and floor decorations, the main burial chambers of the Macedonian tombs were decorated with furnitures. The most common

88 Lane Fox 2011, 4., Andronikos 1984, 66.

89 http://www.yppo.gr/2/g22.jsp?obj_id=58852

90 Miller 1982, 163-166.

equipment which were found almost without exception, in every Macedonian tomb, were the beds, the so-called *klinai* or *kline*-shaped structures, in which the body of the dead was laying. Ordinarily, the tombs contained one kline but tombs with two (in Γ-shape) or three (in Π-shape) *klinai* have been found too. The tombs with one *kline* are the most common and the tombs with three *klinai* are the rarest. The funerary *klinai* were differentiated as the real beds concerning their appearance, dimensions, decoration and equipment. The *klinai* were made of wood or stone and they were decorated with colors and reliefs. The wooden funerary beds were used in the cases of cremation while the stone ones in the cases of inhumation. Both burial types were used in the same period and regardless the sex of the deceased. Apart from the *klinai*, some of the female burials contained thrones too.⁹¹ Except for the *klinai* and the thrones, the tombs contained precious mobile objects as pottery, jewelry and weapons, which would accompany the dead in the other world.

In conclusion, it could be said that the use of the architectural parts and painted elements in the tombs, Macedonian tombs had only a decorative character. Moreover, it is obvious that the architects, who worked for the Macedonian tombs, had the freedom to innovate and use the orders and the architectural parts *ad libitum* without any “guilt” about the untraditional use of the standard architectural principles. However, the most distinguishing element of the Macedonian tombs remains to be their facades, which created an illusion. This illusion aimed to make the graves look like something else, except for tombs. However, the Macedonian architectural style of the burial structures was unique and it was developed independently in relation to the rest of Greece.

A special category of tombs have been uncovered in the region of Vergina which were called “Royal Tombs” because of the numerous precious objects they contained. These tombs will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

2.3.1. The royal cemetery at Vergina

In the previous chapter of the Scythian kurgans, I have dealt especially with the Scythian royal kurgans. Similarly, in this chapter, I will also deal with a Macedonian royal cemetery, in which very important and luxurious finds have been uncovered. The Scythian royal kurgans and the royal Macedonian tombs at Vergina will be the two basic examples of my comparative research in the following and final chapter of this dissertation.

⁹¹ Sismanides 1997, 243-244.

The archaeological area of the ancient Aegae was found in the village of Vergina, near the city of Veroia, in the east of the river Aliakmon, in Northern Greece. In 1855, the archaeological area was located by the French archaeologist Leon Heuzey. Although the area had been located at that time, the excavations in the area began in 1938 by the archaeologist A. Romaïos and the first researches in the cemetery in 1952 by M. Andronikos. However, the first finds from the royal cemetery were uncovered in 1976. The excavations at Vergina were focused in the Great Tumulus of the cemetery from the 1976 to 1980, where the royal tombs with the unique finds were uncovered.⁹²

In the wider area of Vergina over than 300 tombs have been found which belonged to different chronological eras, from the Iron Age to the Hellenistic Era, eleven of which belonged to the type of the Macedonian tomb.⁹³ Generally, according to the archaeological finds from the tombs of this cemetery, the custom of the inhumation is more often than the custom of cremation. On the other hand, very few of the skeletons have been survived because of the composition of the soil.⁹⁴

In the Western part of Vergina's cemetery, the very height burial mound, the Great Tumulus was found, which was called "Big Tomb" by the locals. Its diameter reached the 110 meters and its height was bigger than 12 meters. The burial mound contained a variety of materials, among which fragments of funerary stelai and burial finds. According to this findings, the burial mound of the Great Tumulus was dated almost three decades after the burial monuments which it covered.⁹⁵ Under this huge burial mound, four great tombs and many small and simple graves of unknown citizens were uncovered, in 1977.⁹⁶ The three monumental tombs were named by their excavator as "The Tomb of Persephone", "The Philip's Tomb", "The Tomb of the Prince" and the last one is known as Tomb IV. The first funerary building was a cist tomb and the three others were Macedonian tombs. Two of the Macedonian tombs remained unlooted and their finds are described from many scholars as amazing. While the last one, the Tomb IV, has been found destroyed.

The "Tomb of Persephone" (Tomb I) was a quadrangle, compact cist-tomb (3.5x2.09 meters). This building had no entrances from the walls. The deceased was placed from the roof inside the grave. Under the stones which sealed the tomb, there was a wooden roof. Unfortunately, the tomb was found looted and the signs of the plunder are

92 Andronikos 1984, 11, 17-22.

93 Saatsoglou-Paliadeli 2011, 290.

94 Andronikos 1984, 25.

95 Drougou 2005, 17.

96 Andronikos 1984, 55-62.

visible in the interior walls of the tomb until now. The only finds, which left behind the grave robbers, were some sherds, dated in the middle of the fourth century BC or immediately after 350 BC⁹⁷, a fragment of a marble vessel in the shape of a shell for the female grooming and some bones. The examination of the bones showed that they belonged to a man, a woman and a newborn baby. The skeleton of the man was found incomplete.⁹⁸ The grave goods might be very precious and that could be a reason why the robbers left nothing behind.

However, the most important and famous find from this tomb is not its grave goods but the frescos which have been found in the three of its interior walls, except from the western one where there were only some shelves. In the southern wall, three female figures were depicted which should be the Fates (*Moirai*), Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos. A female character sited in a rock dominated the middle of the eastern wall. The figure has been attributed to the goddess Demetra who sorrowfully was thinking of her daughter who was kidnapped by Pluto. The abduction of Persephone by Pluto was depicted in the northern wall. The heroine of this wall painting drove to the naming of the whole tomb. This wall painting has been already been discussed in the previous section of this chapter. The fresco was dated in the middle of the fourth century BC.⁹⁹ The tomb should belong to one of Phillip's seven wives.¹⁰⁰

Northwestern of the Persephone's Tomb, a second bigger funerary monument has been found under the same burial mound. The Macedonian Tomb II, the so called "Philip's Tomb", was a barrel vaulted building which had two burial chambers, the antechamber (3.36x 4.46 meters) and the main burial chamber (4.46x 4.46 meters) (fig.11). The two chambers were constructed at the same time. Every chamber contained one burial. So, the two deceased should be buried simultaneously.¹⁰¹

A concentration of burned bricks was uncovered over the western part of the barrel vault. This remains could be connected with the existence of a brick construction for the ceremonial fire of the cremation. Pieces of two iron swords, one iron spearhead, many iron pieces of harnesses, many ivory parts from a *kline* and few golden acorns, parts of a crown, were found among others, in the mass of the bricks. Additionally, someone could assume even from these early finds, that the owner of the tomb must be a very important person because he was burned in his ceremonial fire with a number of precious objects.

97 Drougou 2005, 24.

98 Lane Fox 2011, 4.

99 Andronikos 1984, 86-95.

100 Lane Fox 2011, 7.

101 Kottaridi 2011, 90.

The facade of this Macedonian tomb was the most impressive part of this building. Two pillars were uncovered at the two ends of the facade while two Doric columns framed the marble door. The pillars and the columns supported an entablature consisting of an architrave with triglyphs, metopes and cornice. A painted frieze was revealed over the cornice (fig.12). The painting of the frieze was the most impressive part of the facade. Although, time has destroyed part of the painting, it is saved in a very satisfactory level until now. The theme of the painting was the hunt in the forest. Seven hunters on foot, three horsemen, five or six wild animals, familiar to the Macedonians, and nine dogs were depicted in the frieze. Four trees, one pillar and some rocks were depicted in the background. The result of the painting shows that the painter was a very talented artist. The experts argued that the painting material should be watercolors and also that the painting was performed firstly *al fresco* and later *al secco*. Andronikos believed that two of the central characters of the painting, the old bearded man and the laurel-crowned young man, were the depictions of two real people, those of Philip II and Alexander the Great.¹⁰²

The unlooted "Philip's Tomb" was rich in precious grave goods and simultaneously had a minimal luxury. Some of the finds were gifts to the deceased for his afterlife, while others were his personal things or heirlooms. A marble sarcophagus was found in the middle of the western wall of the main burial chamber. A golden chest (larnax), which contained the burned bones of the deceased and a golden crown with 313 oak leaves and 68 acorns, was placed in the interior of the sarcophagus. The few golden acorns, which were found in the mass of bricks out of the tomb, were parts of this crown. Moreover, a bronze torch was uncovered near the western wall of the chamber. Bronze vessels, two tripods (an iron and a bronze), weapons, a sponge and a gilded silver, circular diadem of priest or king with the Heracles Knot were found in the southwestern corner of the chamber. Six iron spearheads, one iron spear end, three pairs of bronze greaves, a sword in its wooden scabbard, a unique iron helmet in the shape and the form of the Athenian helmet and a bronze case from a destroyed wooden, cloth and leather shield were the weapons which were found in this part of the tomb.¹⁰³ The shield was decorated with gold, silver and ivory ornaments. The outer side of the shield was decorated with the ivory figures of a Greek man who had just injured an Amazon.¹⁰⁴

Many drinking vessels, twenty silver, six terracotta and two bronze, were found

¹⁰²Andronikos 1984, 96-116.

¹⁰³Andronikos 1984, 117-175.

¹⁰⁴Kottaridi 2011, 74.

in the middle of the northern wall. The silver vessels and a black glazed oil lamp were dated between 350 and 325 BC.¹⁰⁵ The terracotta vessels were dated in the second half of the fourth century BC.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, an iron breastplate with golden decorative bands and parts was found fallen, in the middle of the chamber. Additionally, traces of a destroyed wooden *kline* were found in front of the sarcophagus. The *kline* should be decorated with ivory mythological figures, glass and golden parts. Apart from these decorative parts, the *kline* had a frieze in which some ivory portraits of real people were depicted, fourteen of these portraits are saved. Two of them had been attributed to Alexander and Phillip II by the excavator. The iron sword and a dagger were found over the remains of the wooden *kline*. These two weapons and the breastplate should have been placed on the wooden *kline* after the funeral. Finally, the eastern part of the chamber was empty.¹⁰⁷

Except from grave goods of the main burial chamber, the finds of the antechamber were dazzling too. This room was unusually big for an antechamber. In this room as in the main chamber, a marble sarcophagus was found, near the southern wall. A golden larnax was placed inside the sarcophagus and the bones of a second deceased were placed inside this golden box. This larnax should have been constructed in the same workshop together with the larnax of the main chamber as the two larnaces were similar. The second larnax was smaller and less decorated than the first one. The bones were enshrouded in a purple and gold textile. Moreover, a golden diadem was placed inside the larnax. Numerous small golden disks decorated with Macedonian stars were found scattered on the floor. They should be ornaments of a curtain which might imitated the starry sky.¹⁰⁸ Many of the finds of the antechamber were found in front of the marble doorway, in a recess which was created between the marble pillars of the door leading from the antechamber to the main chamber of the tomb. A golden gorytus with many arrowheads, a pair of gilded greaves and an iron spearhead were uncovered to the left site of the door. At least ten alabasters and two terracotta amphorae were scattered all over the door's open. A gilded gorget of Thracian art, which was part of the breastplate for the protection of the neck and sternum of the warrior, was revealed in the northern part of the antechamber. Two golden gorgoneia, silver hoops and rosettes were uncovered under the gorget (fig13). These objects should be decorative ornaments of another breastplate,¹⁰⁹

105Drougou 2005, 29.

106Drougou 2005, 189.

107Andronikos 1984, 121- 175.

108Kottaridi 2011, 94-96.

109Kottaridi 2011, 50.

which had been destroyed completely. A small golden crown with 112 myrtle flowers and 80 leaves were found in the floor between the sarcophagus and the party wall of the antechamber and the main chamber. Finally, an Illyrian type, golden fibula was found over the cover of the sarcophagus.¹¹⁰

A special description should be done, at this point of the paper, to an unusual, for the Greek tombs, find. This find is the golden gorytus of the antechamber. This weapon was a Scythian type of quiver, a case for the arrows and the bow. As it has been said in the previous chapter this gorytus had parallels to the gorytoi which have been found in the Royal Kurgans of the Scythian world. More specifically, the theme of the depiction was similar to a fragmentary silver gorytus which was found in the Karagodeuashkh Kurgan and it was dated in the late fourth century BC. These two gorytoi were identical except for their material and might come from the same mold. The gorytus depicted a war scene in two horizontal friezes and specifically the scene of the invasion of a city. Moreover, a standing figure of a man was depicted in the rectangular wing of the gorytus. This gorytus was dated in the middle of the fourth century BC. Why a Scythian weapon was placed in a Macedonian Tomb is a difficult question to answer. The presence of such a weapon, which was unusual to the Greek military practices, inside the grave of a king, could be explained as a gift from the Scythians to the Macedonian King or as a spoil after a battle between the Scythians and Macedonians^{111, 112}

The finds of the golden diadem, the jewelry of this chamber and the crown with the flowers of myrtle testified that the dead might be a woman. This theory was confirmed after the anthropological examination of the bones. On the other hand, the existence of the weapons created some questionings about this burial. The most obvious question is why a woman was buried with so many weapons. One possible answer could be that the woman was a warrior. A second answer could be that the weapons belonged to the deceased of the main burial chamber but they were placed outside the main burial room (exactly outside of the main burial chamber's door) because they were placed after the sealing of this room.¹¹³

The tomb should be dated between 350 and 325 BC, according to the finds and

110 Andronikos 1984, 175-177.

111 Philip II fought with the Scythians, in 339 B.C. in the region of Scythia Minor. During this expedition, he married Meda who was a Getain princess. The result of this battle was the victory of the Macedonians and the death of the Scythian king, Atteas. Andronikos 1980, 99.

112 Jacobson 1995, 228-230.

113 Andronikos 1984, 178-179.

the architectural style of the building which were dated in this era.¹¹⁴ The resident of the main burial chamber, due to all these remarkable and precious finds, should be a capable warrior¹¹⁵ and a king. All the finds, from the facade of the building to the weapons from both of the chambers, had a very high and special quality. The tomb should be called Royal without no doubt. Therefore, the next question which comes to the mind at this point, after the answer of the chronology, is who this king in the main room and the lady in the antechamber could be.

There is a debate which lasts years between the historians and the archaeologists, and regards the occupant of the tomb. Many opinions have been said about this issue.¹¹⁶ As it has been said above, the diadem which was found in the "Philip's Tomb" was a royal symbol of the king. Thus, the only certain is that the resident of the tomb was a Macedonian King. In the period between 350 to 310 B.C. three Macedonian kings have died: Philip II, Alexander the Great and Philip III Arrhidaios. It is known from the written sources that Alexander the Great have been buried somewhere in Alexandria in Egypt. So, there are two final candidates about the tomb, Philip II and Philip III Arrhidaios. Diodorus reports that Philip III was reburied by Kassander some years after his execution by Olympias. In this tomb there was no evidence of reburial but only remains of a primary cremation.¹¹⁷ Thus, the resident of the grave should be Philip II who was murdered in 336 at Aegae and not Philip III who was an unable king and warrior and such funerary honors would be incongruous to his royal personality.¹¹⁸

The deceased woman in the antechamber should be one of the king's wives. Andronikos believed that she could be Cleopatra, which was Philip's last wife.¹¹⁹ Other researchers believed that, she could be the Geto-Scythian princess Meda, who was his sixth wife.¹²⁰ In addition, the golden gorytus which was found in the antechamber could belong to her, as well it came from her region.¹²¹ In my opinion, the matter is not to whom the tomb belonged but the funerary building itself and its findings which enlightened the funerary customs of the Macedonians and offered knowledge and new information about

114 Andronikos 1984, 221-224.

115 At least four complete panoplies and many weapons were found in the tomb and in the traces of the ceremonial fire. Kottaridi 2011, 49.

116 According to some researchers such as Olga Palagia, Eugene Borza and Petros Themelis, the Tomb II at Vergina should be dated later than 320 and also it should belong to Philip III. Palagia 2011, 479-485. Borza 1990, 265-266, Themelis-Touratsoglou 1997, 185.

117 Kottaridi 2011, 61.

118 Andronikos 1984, 227.

119 Andronikos 1984, 231-232.

120 Lane Fox 2011, 32.

121 Kottaridi 2011, 52.

many aspects of life and death in that era of the Macedonian kingdom.

The second Macedonian Tomb under this burial mound was found northwestern of the "Philip's Tomb". This tomb was called "The Tomb of the Prince" (Tomb III) due to the resident of the grave who was a young sixteen years old boy. The examination of the bones of the deceased showed that he was cremated. But a funerary fire was not found near the tomb. Thus, the dead should be cremated elsewhere and be transported later in this tomb.¹²² However, four terracotta vessels were found on the top of the vaulted roof which were related to a ceremonial sacrifice to the dead. These vessels were dated between 325 and 300 BC.¹²³

Fortunately for the archaeologists, this tomb was found unlooted too. The tomb had a main burial chamber and an antechamber. Two pillars in the two ends of the facade and two marble pilasters which supported the marble door-lintel decorated the frontage of the tomb (fig.14). Two relief shields decorated the space between the pillars and the pilasters. A Doric architrave was supported over the pillars and over it there were triglyphs and metopes. There was also a frieze which should have a painted decoration. Traces of colors, wood and leather have been detected in the surface of the frieze. The external door of the tomb was marble. A similar marble door was found inside the tomb which separated the antechamber from the main burial chamber.

The mobile findings of this tomb were few but important. A stone table was found in front of the western wall of the main burial chamber. The table had a cavity in which a funerary silver hydria with the bones of the dead was found. A gold and purple fabric should cover the bones of the deceased. The fabric was totally destroyed and only some traces of an organic material were found over the bones. A golden crown with 27 acorns and 151 oak leaves was placed in the raw of the vessel. Two iron spearheads were uncovered near the edge of the table. The traces of a wooden *kline*, such as parts of wood and ivory figures, were revealed in front of the table. Many silver vessel were uncovered in the northeastern corner of the room. Two big, silver plated, bronze, cauldron-shaped vessels, a silver plated, iron, lampstand and its terracotta double-nozzle oil lamp were found in the northwestern corner. The black glazed oil lamp was dated between 325 and 300 BC.¹²⁴ A pair of gilded bronze greaves, a gorget, a gilded bronze crown with myrtle flowers and leaves, and some strigils were found in the southwestern part of the

122 Kottaridi 2011, 106.

123 Drougou 2005, 195.

124 Drougou 2005, 62.

chamber.¹²⁵ The chamber was decorated with a frieze which was painted on wooden panels. Garlands of real flowers decorated the walls in the same manner as the painted garlands in the “Tomb of Lysson and Kallikles”.¹²⁶

A painted frieze decorated the antechamber's interior of the “Prince's Tomb”. A chariot race was depicted in the frieze. The scene was composed of 29 chariots and each chariot had one charioteer and two white horses (fig.15). Some gilded bronze and iron strigils, a lower part of a sword, an iron spearhead and many traces of organic materials were found inside this antechamber.

The wealth of the tomb testifies that the deceased, who might have died approximately in the 325 BC according to the chronology of the funerary finds¹²⁷, should have been a member of the Macedonian royal family.¹²⁸ The majority of the researchers agreed that the deceased should have been prince Alexander IV, the son of Alexander the Great and Roxane.

On the edge of the Great tumulus a third Macedonian tomb (Tomb IV) was found. This tomb was a single-chamber grave (fig.16). Four free-standing Doric bases of columns were found in situ, in the facade of the tomb. Except for the columns, a small part of the floor paved with limestones has been saved. The tomb was found damaged a great deal. The grave goods which were found inside this tomb were very few. Traces of golden and ivory fragments testified that inside this tomb there was a *kline* which was decorated with a relief frieze of ivory figures. Moreover, some terracotta figures were found in the ashes of the ceremonial fire which was held in the area of the tomb. The few remains of this tomb could be dated in the early third century BC.¹²⁹

125 Andronikos 1984, 198-202.

126 Kottaridi 2011, 111.

127 Andronikos 1984, 224-225.

128 Andronikos 1984, 206-208.

129 Kottaridi 2011, 22-23.

3. A comparative approach to the similarities and differences between the Royal Scythian Kurgans and the Macedonian Tombs

3.1. Similarities and differences between the Scythian and Macedonian funerary customs

In these final chapter of my dissertation, I will deal with the comparison of the Macedonian with Scythian burial customs, as they derive from the remains of two main categories of burial structures, the tombs of the royal Scythian kurgans and the royal Macedonian tombs at Vergina. Someone could notice that the Macedonian funerary culture and architecture could have some similarities with the Scythian ones. I also believe that there are some common points between the burial customs of the Macedonians and those of the Scythians. So, the aim of this chapter is to report the similarities and the differences in the burial customs and practices between these two cultures.

All the above archaeological finds, mobile and immobile, which have been reported in the previous chapters and would be compared in next sections of this chapter, provide us with the most important knowledge for the past cultures, which is their traditions and their customs. The understanding of the use and the construction of these objects could enlighten the researcher about most of these customs and practices, which would stay unknown without these findings. These traditions are the main ingredients, which form the unique identity of a civilization in the world. The funerary archaeological finds and the grave goods reveal the way, in which the cultures lived and died, and shows what they believed about their deceased, the bonds between them and their ancestors, the relationships with the gods, the hope for an after death life or even just the vanity of the human existence. The funerary customs and the objects, which were related to them, are part of the general notion that we have about a civilization.

According to the archaeological finds from Macedonia and Scythia, someone could report a number of similarities but also some important differences in the funerary customs, which are obvious between these two cultures. First of all, the Macedonians had two different ways of burial practices. The first one was the inhumation of the dead and the other one the cremation. However, the most usual burial practice, in the region of Macedonia, was the inhumation. The cremations were really rare in Macedonia in the early

Iron Age and became more frequent in the royal cemetery of Aegae, in the Archaic period. However, the cremation of the dead was the commonest practice on the royal tombs at Vergina, in the fourth century BC.¹³⁰

On the other hand, in the case of the Scythian burials, the inhumation was the only way of the burial practice. However, sometimes the wooden constructions, which usually were placed over the graves, were burned before the final burial.¹³¹ As Herodotus reports, the body of the Scythian King was embalmed and carried on a wagon for forty days to visit all the members of the tribe. After this long trip, the dead king was transferred in the land of Gerroi, where he was buried, and not burned, in the royal Scythian cemetery.¹³² Herodotus says nothing about cremation and the archaeological finds came to confirm his words.

The Scythian dead kings were accompanied in their graves, except for precious daily objects, jewelry and weapons, also by human and animal sacrifices. The members of their service were strangled and placed inside the graves, in the posts they had in their real life to attend their master even after death. For example, the cooks, the stablemen, the mistresses and other servants were placed, according to their specialty, in separate grave chambers, such as the kitchen, the stable and so on. Furthermore, a number of animals were killed and placed in the graves, too. These animals could be horses and cattle. In the graves of the warrior elite, there were no sacrificed humans but only animals, such as horses.¹³³

On the other hand, in the Macedonian tombs and generally in the Greek tombs, there were not traces of human sacrifices for the dead. However, traces of sacrificed animals have been found in many ceremonial fires of Macedonian tombs. An example of this tradition is the remains of hounds and four horses, which have been found in the funeral pyre over the top of the vault of the royal tomb II at Vergina. Additionally, traces of animals have been also uncovered in the remains of the ceremonial fires of the “Lysson and Kallikles Tomb” and in the tomb of the Maternity Home at Thessaloniki.¹³⁴ Although, there is a theory that apart from the animal sacrifices in the royal tomb II at Vergina, there could be a sort of human sacrifice, too. An hypothesis could be that the woman in the antechamber of the tomb II at Vergina, was Philip's wife Meda, who should have committed suicide after the death of her husband, according to the customs of her land.

¹³⁰ Kottaridi 2011, 61.

¹³¹ Baumer 2012, 238.

¹³² Hdt 4.71.

¹³³ Baumer 2012, 238

¹³⁴ Themelis-Touratsoglou 1997, 146.

She was a Geto-Scythian princess and their tradition ordered the wife to follow her lord to death. Thus, it could be said that there was a kind of a “voluntary” human sacrifice, in this tomb.¹³⁵ Otherwise, the presence of a dead woman in the antechamber of this tomb, who died at the same time with the dead man of the main burial chamber, would be really problematic, while both burial chambers were constructed and closed about the same time.

One more similarity between the Macedonian and Scythian tombs, which has been many times reported, was the fact that they were built for members of the elite and aristocracy. This is the reason why these graves were rich in precious grave goods and had a costly monumental character, which only the wealthy members of a society could afford. Moreover, someone could assume, according to the fact that there were usually more than one burials under the same burial mound, that they constituted a kind of family graves and the dead should have had family relationships between each other.¹³⁶ This hypothesis was confirmed in the case of the Macedonian royal tombs, which were uncovered in the Great Tumulus at Vergina.

Furthermore, both in Macedonia and Scythia, there were no discriminations between dead men or women for the building of such tombs. Luxurious tombs could be built for both sexes even for children, in both cultures. It could be said that there was a kind of gender equality in the death privileges.¹³⁷ In the case of Scythia, many female graves, that have been uncovered under the kurgans, were equal to the male ones. An example of such a luxurious female tomb has been found in the “Three Brothers Kurgan” western of Nymphaion, where a Scythian aristocratic woman was buried in 300 BC, accompanied, apart from the other grave goods, by her sacrificed servant and a horse. This tomb, despite the many Greek influences, which are observed in many burial findings, preserved also some of the most important Scythian burial traditions, creating in this way a mixture of burial customs.¹³⁸ In Scythia, there was also the tradition to include a wagon among the grave goods of the female burials. These kind of finds lead to the easier identification of a female Scythian tomb.¹³⁹

In the case of Macedonia, there is the example of the female burial in the antechamber of the Tomb II at Vergina. Additionally, we can assume that in the case of the tombs, which had two or more funerary beds, couples or members of the same family

135 Kottaridi 2011, 62-63.

136 Rolle 2006, 171.

137 Rolle 2006, 171.

138 Baumer 2012, 251.

139 Baumer 2012, 238.

(men and women) could be buried in them. Otherwise, women and men were buried indiscriminately in the Macedonian tombs. Furthermore, it is common practice in the region of Vergina that the female bones were placed after their cremation in thrones, inside their tombs. Such examples could be the Macedonian tombs VIII and III at Vergina. However, the tradition of the distinctive use of thrones for the female burials was unknown to the rest of Macedonia where men and women were buried only in funerary beds.¹⁴⁰

As it has been said above, the children were treated in the same way in the burial procedures and honors as the adults. An example of such a children burial is the Prince's Tomb or Tomb III in the royal cemetery at Vergina, which was built for a young deceased, who should be a member of the royal family.

3.2. Similarities and differences between the Scythian and Macedonian funerary architecture

The architectural burial buildings are part of the funerary customs of a culture. Thus, in this section of the chapter, I will deal with the architectural burial structures in Macedonia and Scythia which also present some similarities. As it has already been reported in the former two chapters, both Scythian Kurgans and Macedonian Tombs were underground or semi-underground burial structures with a monumental character. These constructions required a lot of money to be constructed. So, only a small part of the society could afford them. Thus, the deceased residents of these buildings were members of the elite and aristocracy of both cultures, while the ordinary citizens were buried in cist tombs or in simple pit graves.¹⁴¹

The Scythian tombs are known as Kurgans. These Kurgans were high burial mounds, which covered usually more than one underground Scythian graves. On the other hand, the Macedonian Tombs, which were partially or totally underground monumental graves, were also hidden under soil mounds, the burial tumuli.¹⁴² Similarly to the Scythian kurgans, the burial mounds of the Macedonian tombs covered often more than one graves. In both cases, the deceased, which were buried under the same tumulus, could be related with family ties. Perhaps, the practice of the building of the earthen mounds had to do with the need for the protection of the tombs from the robbers, who finally always found

140 Sismanides 1997, 197-199.

141 Themelis, Touratsoglou 1997, 159.

142 Miller 1982, 153.

the way to get into them, or with the wish the tombs to be visible from far away. In addition, the last hypothesis is stressed with the practice of both cultures to notice their tombs with some special “marks”. The Scythians used to place in the top of the burial mounds anthropomorphic statues as a symbol of the tomb¹⁴³, while the Macedonians and the other Greeks used to place funerary *stele* with the name and even sometimes with the image of the deceased, on the top of their graves. Sixty-seven such funerary *stele*, which belonged to several tombs and periods of time, have been uncovered in the earth fill of the burial mound of the Macedonian Royal Tombs at Vergina, as they were part of the Great Tumulus' building material.¹⁴⁴

Another common point between the funerary architecture of the Scythian Kurgans and the Macedonian Tombs could be the funerary *dromoi*. These *dromoi* were the passages which led from the ground surface to the underground entrances of tombs and served in the ceremonial procedure of the funerals.¹⁴⁵ Both in Macedonia and Scythia, these passages were filled with soil after the end of the funeral and thus, the entrance to the tomb closed forever. However, the use of this *dromos* in the Scythian kurgans was a Hellenistic influence. The kurgans with a *dromos* are dated between the fourth and the third centuries BC. An example of a Scythian kurgan with a *dromos* was the Oguz Kurgan on Dnieper, in which the *dromos* was made of limestone plates and led to the main tomb of the kurgan. Furthermore, in Zarskij Kurgan in eastern Crimea, there was also a *dromos* made of limestone plates, which led also to the central grave (fig.17).¹⁴⁶ In the case of Macedonia, an example of such a ceremonial passage is the *dromos*, 7.80 meters long and made of square limestones, which has been uncovered in front of the Macedonian “Tomb of Bella” at Vergina (fig.18).¹⁴⁷

The Macedonian tombs and the Scythian tombs had one more architectural similarity. This similarity had to do with the way they were covered. The Macedonian tombs had barrel-vaulted roofs, while the Scythian tombs were corbel-vaulted. The royal Scythian kurgans appeared in the late fifth century BC, while the earliest Macedonian tomb, which has been found until now, is dated in 340 BC. It has been already reported in the previous chapter that some scholars believe that the architectural plan of the Macedonian tombs was a loan from the East and it became familiar to the Macedonians after the expedition of Alexander the Great in Asia. Nowadays, after the new

143 Baumer 2012, 238.

144 Kottaridi 2011, 16-17.

145 Miller 1982, 153.

146 Baumer 2012, 251.

147 Andronikos 1984, 35.

archaeological data this theory is considered outdated. The Eurydice's tomb, which is dated in 340 BC according to the three Panathenaic amphorae, which were found inside the tomb, can prove that this architectural form was known to the Macedonians before the campaign of Alexander in the East. In addition, there is the narration of Plato in *Laws* in the middle of the fourth century BC, which describes in detail a Macedonian tomb. Miller believed that "The Macedonian tomb was surely a creation entirely of the Macedonian architects"¹⁴⁸. Additionally, Gossel reports that the barrel-vaulted roofs should be a creation of the Macedonians, while there were not other recognized forerunners in the same form and structure of the buildings in combination with the configuration of the facades.¹⁴⁹

Summarizing the differences between the Macedonian and the Scythian tombs, we can say that, as regards the Macedonian tombs, they had a more monumental character in relation to the Scythian tombs, which were simpler constructions. The Macedonian tombs had stone masonries and monumental facades, which created the illusion of a temple. The interiors were equipped with marble, stone or wooden furnitures such as beds and/or thrones, while the walls were decorated with wall paintings. On the other hand, most of the Scythian tombs were wooden constructions, which collapsed after the filling of the soil tumulus. Furthermore, the Scythian tombs had no exterior decorations because they did not have monumental facades or even simple facades. The Oguz royal kurgan is an exception to the wooden masonry of the Scythian tombs. The Oguz kurgan was built with elaborated limestone plates. Moreover, these stone burial constructions developed in the region of the Bosporan kingdom after the interaction with the Greeks. Generally speaking, the Scythians were focused mainly in the luxurious mobile grave goods of the tombs' interiors more than the wall decoration of the interior and exterior of their burial buildings. Even the architectural buildings themselves had a more shabby character than their interior findings.¹⁵⁰ On the other hand, the Macedonians worried much more about the architectural building itself, while they worked hard to create these facades, which were constructed to be visible by the people and not to be hidden under tones of soil.

148 Miller 1982, 153.

149 Gossel 1980, 10.

150 Baumer 2012, 238.

3.3. Similarities and differences between the Scythian and the Macedonian tomb findings

Many researchers have already noticed that many similar artifacts have been found between some Macedonian and Scythian tombs. Additionally, many grave goods that have been uncovered inside the Scythian royal kurgans, were constructed not only in Greek but especially in Macedonian workshops. Notably, a number of Scythian burial objects is comparable to some grave goods, which have been uncovered in the royal tombs at Vergina. In this paper I will report the most characteristic of them.

Starting with some comparable burial findings, which have been uncovered in graves in the Scythian and Macedonian lands, I will deal with a special and common type of jewelry. A golden pair of earrings, decorated with a disk, a hanging boat shape and chains with rosettes and amphorae, was found in the Kul Oba kurgan (fig.19). These earrings which were dated in the fourth century¹⁵¹, were quite similar in the technique and style to a golden pair of earrings which were uncovered in the cist tomb Z at Derveni, in Macedonia¹⁵² (fig.20). However, the theme of these jewels was very popular in the Mediterranean world in the fourth century BC. Pendant jewels similar to the Scythian ones have been found also in Bolshaya Bliznitsa kurgan, in western Asia Minor, in Madytos and in Pavlovskoy tomb.¹⁵³

Moreover, continuing with the comparable burial objects from these two regions, two more jewels from these two areas can be reported. A golden necklace with rosettes and amphorae shaped beads, which was found in a kurgan from Nymphaeum (fig.21), was quite similar to a golden necklace with beads in the form of amphorae, which was also found in the tomb Z at Derveni (fig.22).¹⁵⁴ Unfortunately, the necklace of Nymphaeum comes from an illegal excavation. Thus, the information about the source and the date of the Scythian necklace remains unknown.¹⁵⁵

Furthermore, apart from the comparable jewels, some similarities could be also detected in the depicted themes, which were chosen for the decoration of the vessels on both regions, in Macedonia and Scythia. An example of this category could be the decorative band of an ivy tendril with heart shaped leaves, which was depicted in the rim of a gilded silver bowl from the Solokha kurgan. Obviously, this theme had a Greek origin.

151 Jacobson 1995, 91, 101.

152 Themelis, Touratsoglou 1997, 127-128.

153 Jacobson 1995, 92.

154 Themelis, Touratsoglou 1997, 127.

155 Redfern 2012, 66.

A quite similar theme to this depiction observed around the neck of a crater which was found in the Tomb B at Derveni. An ivy tendril band is depicted also in the neck of Derveni crater. Such depictions as the themes of ivy, were unfamiliar to the Scythians before their interaction and co-existence with their Greek neighbours in the same region. Thus, the Solokha vessel should come from a Greek workshop or the artist should have had Greek influences.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, a hunting scene was depicted in the body of the Solokha vessel. The same scene, consisted of many wild animals such as lions and lionesses, was depicted also in the neck of the Derveni crater (fig.23). Of course, the hunting themes were favorite decorative depictions for the vessels of the Early Hellenistic era. The Kul-Oba vessel is the last finding of this sort report of the similar decorative depictions in the Macedonian and Scythian vessels. The decoration in the lower part of this vessel, which depicted Scythians, long petals and a strip with a repeated linear decorative motif, resembles also to the decoration of a silver kalyx-cup from Macedonia, which was dated between 350 and 325 BC, as well as to the decoration of the vessels, which were found in the tomb II at Sevasti, in Thessaly and a bowl, which is now in Baltimore.¹⁵⁷

As regards the similar findings between the Macedonian tombs and the Scythian kurgans, the examples are fewer but very important and they came especially from the royal tombs at Vergina. Two comparable gorgets for the protection of the warrior's neck or sternum, were found inside two different tombs. The first one was found in the Tolstaya Mogila kurgan (fig.24) and the second one was found in the antechamber of the Macedonian royal tomb II at Vergina (fig.25). However, these two gorgets differ significantly in their construction.¹⁵⁸ The Scythian gorget is a very complex object, which was consisted of four twisted ropes. These ropes decreased their diameter from the lower to the upper part while its decorative ornaments were placed in friezes between the ropes. The upper and lower friezes were constructed in open work, while in the central frieze, floral ornaments were pinned on a compact golden laminate. Wild animals, such as griffins, horses, boars and lions, were depicted in the lower frieze. Two kneeling Scythian men were depicted in the center of the upper frieze while they excoriated a fleece. Animals and two more human figures were depicted on the left and right of the two central Scythian men. The gorget ended with two lion-head terminals. Due to the delicacy of this gorget, some scholars believe that it must be a ceremonial object and not a part of a real battle

¹⁵⁶ Jacobson 1995, 199.

¹⁵⁷ Treister 2005, 59

¹⁵⁸ Jacobson 1995, 101-102.

armor.¹⁵⁹

On the other hand, the gilded silver gorget, which was found inside the antechamber of the Tomb II at Vergina, was decorated with three relief friezes. The lower two friezes depicted rosettes and flowers and the upper frieze depicted four medallions with cavalry men. The heads of two beardless young men were depicted on either sides of the medallions. This gorget was part of an armour. Other parts of the same panoply were some golden buttons, two golden gorgoneia, the gilded greaves and the golden gorytus, which were found in this antechamber too.¹⁶⁰ Additionally, except for the similarities, which could be detected between these two gorgets, the decorative frieze of the gorget, in which griffins and lions have tearing to pieces some horses, deers and boars, is similar to the decorative frieze from the lower part of the body of the Derveni crater, in which griffins and lions have dissecting a deer and an ox¹⁶¹. Apart from the pectoral from the antechamber of the tomb II at Vergina, similar collars have been found in Thracian tombs too, such as in Mal-Tepe, in Vurbitsa, in Yankovo as well as in Katerini and in Pydna, in Greece.¹⁶² Some scholars, such as Treister and Archibald, believe that the gorget from Tolstaya Mogila imitated the Thraco-Macedonian gorgets, which were more elaborate than was the Scythian ones. These theory is strengthen with specific findings such as the gorgets from Mal-Tepe and Vurbitsa, which tend to remind the gorget, which was found in Bol'shaya Bliznitsa and additionally, the decoration of the Tolstaya Mogila gorget, which seems like the decoration of the Derveni crater.¹⁶³

Furthermore, there is also one more enigmatic grave good with a Scythian origin inside a Macedonian royal tomb. As it has already been said in the previous chapters, a Scythian weapon, a golden gorytus has been uncovered inside the antechamber of the Tomb II at Vergina.¹⁶⁴ This gorytus has an identical twin coming from the Karagodeuashkh Kurgan in the Kuban region. Both gorytoi have the same decorative depiction, the same length and shape. The only difference between them is the material, of which they were made. The gorytus from Vergina was golden, while the gorytus from the Kuban region was silver.¹⁶⁵ These two weapons belong to a wider group of five similar gorytoi, four of which have been found inside four different Scythian tombs as grave

159 Jacobson 1995, 115-116.

160 Kottaridi 2011, 51-52.

161 Themelis, Touratsoglou 1997, 71.

162 Andronikos 1984, 189, Treister 2005, 63.

163 Treister 2005, 63.

164 Andronikos 1984, 184.

165 Jacobson 1995, 229.

goods.

Except for the obvious question, why such a Scythian weapon was uncovered inside a Macedonian royal tomb, there is always one more reversal question. The question is why such weapons with Greek mythological scenes of Achilles' life were found inside four Scythian tombs, while these kind of decorative themes would be unfamiliar to the Scythian audience. However, the truth is that Achilles was common to Greeks and Scythians and that both cultures were familiar with the mythology of this hero. So, a hypothetic answer to the second question could be that these weapons were diplomatic presents from the Greeks, who lived in the Scythian land, to the Scythian rulers.¹⁶⁶ Of course, these weapons could be also directly orders from the Scythian customers to the workshops, in which could work both Greek or Scythian craftsmen. Furthermore, it is known that the Scythians were famous archers, so such weapons would be useful to them, unlike the Greeks, who were unfamiliar with fighting with bows and arrows. Therefore, such objects should have been made for Scythian use only. Moreover, a probable answer to the first question could be that the gorytus in the Philip's tomb could be a diplomatic gift from a Scythian chief to the Macedonian king. Of course this weapon could be even a wedding present to Philip, while, when he took part in a campaign to Scythia, in 339 BC, he married Meda, the princess of a Scythian tribe, the Getai.¹⁶⁷

Furthermore, as regards the interiors of both, Scythian and Macedonian, tombs, they were furnished like small real rooms, which could service the needs of the deceased in their after death life. The Scythian tombs were equipped with daily objects such as vessels, textiles, carpets and generally house equipment. Furthermore, there were also sacrificed humans inside the tombs, which were members of the human staff of the deceased such as servants, women and children. The sacrificed servants were placed in their real life's posts as stablemen or cooks.¹⁶⁸ It could be said that the sacrificed humans were parts of the offerings to the dead and they consisted part of the grave goods for the Scythian King. Generally speaking, the furnishing inside the kurgans was made of wood. Some fragments of decorative glass nodes, which have been uncovered in the Kul-Oba kurgan, and should be ornaments in funerary beds, testify that there were wooden sarcophagi in the Scythian tombs. Numerous similar glass ornaments for the decoration of the wooden *klinai* have been also uncovered in many Macedonian tombs.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Baumer 2012, 251.

¹⁶⁷ Kottaridi 2011, 52.

¹⁶⁸ Rolle 2006, 174.

¹⁶⁹ Sismanides 1997, 34, Themelis, Touratsoglou 1997, 52.

Furthermore, even traces of textiles, which were used as bedclothes for the funeral beds, were uncovered mainly in tombs of Crimea.¹⁷⁰ After the Greco-Scythian co-existence in the Bosporan area, more and more Greek influences observed in the Scythian funerary customs. The presence of a stone bed, *kline*, inside a Scythian tomb is an example of this Greek influence. This *kline* was uncovered in the Tomb 1, from the Kurgan 1 of the “Three Brothers Kurgans” from Nymphaion, which was dated in the 300 BC. The tomb belonged to a noble Scythian woman.¹⁷¹ These type of beds are well known from the Macedonian tombs, while they were the basic burial equipment of the tombs. Additionally, the Macedonian tombs were rich in grave goods such as precious jewelry, clay and metal vessels, weapons and furniture such as stone or wooden funeral beds, thrones, tables and sarcophagi. However, there were no traces of human sacrifices in any of the Macedonian Tombs, which would be offered to the deceased as a gift to service him in the other world, as this practice was against the Greek funerary traditions.

As a general conclusion to the comparison between the Scythian and the Macedonian burial findings, someone could observe a basic difference: the grave goods from the Macedonian tombs emitted an austere luxury, while the Scythian tomb findings presented an excessive opulence.¹⁷² However, in this point of the research, someone should wonder if all these similarities between the Scythian and the Macedonian tombs are just an accidental coincidence. In my opinion the data are too many to be explained as a coincidence.

Conclusion

A comparative approach has been tried, during this paper, between the Macedonian and the Scythian tombs, through the findings and the architectural remains. Many archaeologists and researchers, such as M. Andronikos, E. Jacobson and M. Treister, have already painted out the similarities of findings, which derived from the Macedonian Tombs, and especially from the royal tombs at Vergina, and the Scythian

¹⁷⁰ Sismanides 1997, 224-225.

¹⁷¹ Baumer 2012, 251-252.

¹⁷² Andronikos 1984, 121.

Kurgans.¹⁷³ Furthermore, some of them have set some questions and thoughts about the presence of these Macedonian objects in the Scythian graves and vice versa. After all the above comparative approaches to the quite similar or even identical archaeological burial findings, the similarities in the funerary architecture and the funeral traditions, it could be said that there should be a network of cultural and artistic exchange that could help to explain these similarities in some of the funerary customs between these two cultures. Additionally, this hypothesis is reinforced by the results of the analysis of many of these findings, which proves that many of them have been constructed in the Pontic region by Macedonian craftsmen.¹⁷⁴

Anyway, the Greek presence, influence and interaction in the art, myths and in many other aspects of life in this region, which formed the so-called Greco-Scythian style, was intense in the northern Black Sea region from the fourth century BC. About 330 to 400 objects, which have been found in the northern Black Sea region were classified in the Greco-Scythian style.¹⁷⁵ Although, due to the presence of the Greek colonies in the area and the interactions of the cultures, which created this mixed result, these finds are not unexplained. On the other hand, the Macedonians had never established a colony in the Scythian land, which could explain this interaction. Contrariwise, the Macedonians were interested mainly for the lands of central Thrace.¹⁷⁶ So, how could these similarities and interactions be defined?

The questionings about all the similarities, which are detected between the Macedonian and the Scythian funeral culture, could have many hypothetical answers. A first thought could be the quite possible presence of the Macedonians in the northern Black Sea region, which could create a kind of cultural interaction between the two cultures. However, this thought is not so hypothetical and historically inaccurate, while there is a historical event, which proves that the Macedonians and the Scythians had some kind of relationship in the middle of the fourth century BC, in the period when Philip II intended to increase the Macedonian kingdom. Thus, the Macedonian ruler organized many expeditions in Thrace, in Scythia Minor and even beyond the region of Danube already from 353 BC. However, it remains unknown if and in which way the Greek cities of the West Pontic coast were included in the Philip's imperial program and afterwards the Alexander's one. Either these cities might have been under the Macedonian control or they

173 Jacobson 1995, 101.

174 Treister 2005, 61.

175 Treister 2005, 61.

176 Loukopoulou 2011, 467.

could have been allies and friends of the Macedonians. Nevertheless, Philip's main aim was to dominate firstly in Thrace. Although, this aim was partly succeeded by Philip and Alexander. In any case, the hinterland of Thrace was never part of the Macedonian dominion.¹⁷⁷ Anyway, Philip managed to achieve an alliance with the Scythian tribes, in order to ensure his control on the Thracian cities. In 342 BC, Philip allied with Kothela, the Geto-Scythian king. Philip also married Kothela's daughter, Meda, in order to secure their alliance, as customarily used to happen at that time. In 341, Philip reached the western shores of Black Sea up to the river Istron. In the winter of 340/339, a Scythian king, who ruled in Scythia Minor, the king Atteas, asked Philip to help him with his army. Philip sent Macedonian reinforcements to the Scythians, which finally were expelled. Then, in 339, Philip marched in Scythia Minor, where he defeated the Scythians and killed their king Atteas.¹⁷⁸

On the other hand, the Geto-Scythian princess, Meda, after her marriage with the Macedonian king, brought some of the traditions of her land to her new home. Some of these foreign customs could be detected in the female burial of the antechamber of the royal tomb II at Vergina, if we assume, of course, that the female deceased was Meda. Some views about these foreign traditions have been already reported in the second chapter of this paper. So, according to the above reasonings, an additional answer to the questionings about the similarities in the burial findings and generally in the funeral traditions between the Macedonians and Scythians, could derive from the connections, dealings and relations that these cultures presented from the middle of the fourth century BC.

In my opinion, all the battles and the alliances between the Macedonians and the Scythians, as well as the existence of the other Greek colonies in the northern Black Sea region or even the geographical proximity between these lands, could bring these two cultures closer. These cultures seem that they share some common points in some of their traditions. However, despite the similarities in some burial findings and traditions there are also many significant differences, which characterize and distinguish them. In this point, it should be stressed once more, that the form of the Macedonian burial buildings was the creation of the Macedonian architects, who developed the architectural forms of the previous Greek burial structures, especially from Athens and Peloponnesus, and led it to another level, using the barrel vaulted roofs and the monumental facades.¹⁷⁹ The

¹⁷⁷ Loukopoulou 2011, 467-471.

¹⁷⁸ Andronikos 1980, 98-99.

¹⁷⁹ Miller 1982, 157.

Macedonian tombs were developed regardless to the development of the corbel-vaulted Scythian kurgans, which were dated from the end of the fifth century BC. Additionally, as regards the burial findings with the Macedonian origin, which have been uncovered inside the Scythian tombs, they should have consisted indications of power, wealth and superiority for the Scythian noble deceased. Objects and artifacts with Greek, in general, origin should be highly respected in Scythia, while they were found only inside the tombs of the noble Scythians.

From the fourth century BC and afterwards the Scythians and the Greeks coexisted friendly in the same area and this is the time when the Scythians should have adopted some of the Macedonian funerary customs, as they did with other Greek traditions. However, some of the most characteristic Scythian burial customs were preserved in the tombs of the Scythian elite, in combination with some of the Greek ones until the end of the fourth century BC. The most cruel, to the Greek eyes, custom was the sacrifices of humans or animals, a tradition that was almost unknown to the Greeks. A Macedonian exception to this custom is the sacrificed animals, which were found in the ceremonial pyre over the royal tomb II at Vergina.

The royal Scythian kurgans were developed between the middle of the fifth century BC until the end of the fourth century BC, almost during one and a half century, while the Macedonian tombs were developed between the middle of the fourth century BC until the middle of the second century BC, almost during two centuries. Both types of tombs had almost the same period of life but the Macedonian tombs presented a greater development, experimentation, originality and innovation than the Scythian ones did.

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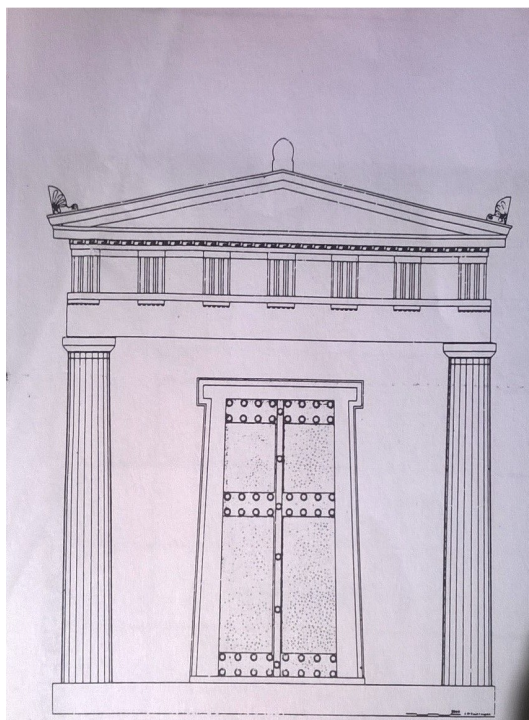


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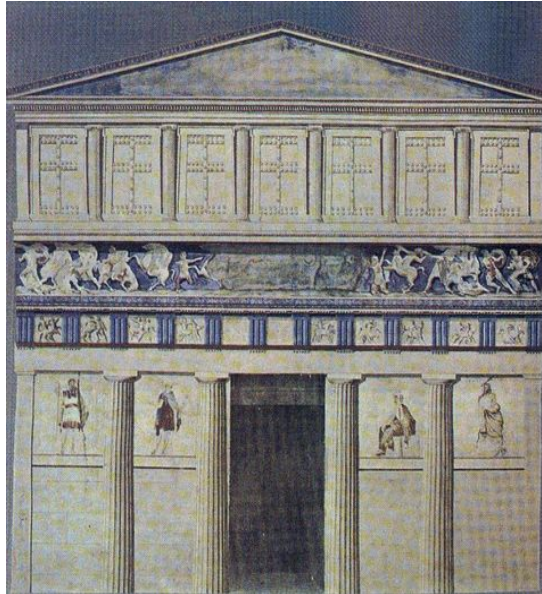


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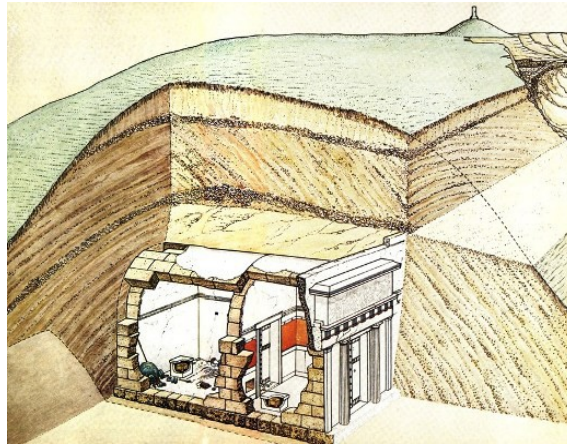


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